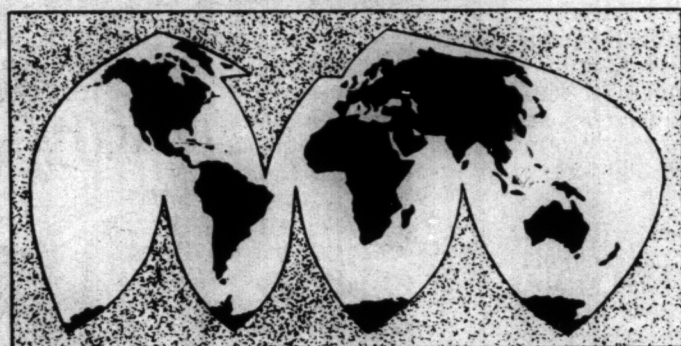


Sent . . . to Serve All Nations



Week of Prayer
for Foreign Missions
December 2-9, 1990

Lottie Moon
Christmas Offering
National Goal \$86,000,000

Baptist ministers to police department through chaplaincy

By Mark Wingfield

CHARLOTTE, N.C. (BP) — Call him counselor. Call him "Father." Call him reverend. However he is addressed, Dennis Whitaker will listen.

That's his job. Whitaker, a Southern Baptist, is police counselor with the Charlotte (N.C.) police department. In that role, he represents a growing trend among Southern Baptists to take the gospel to the workplace through chaplaincy, according to Huey Perry, director of the Home Mission Board's chaplaincy division.

Whitaker is one of 13 full-time law enforcement chaplain-counselors endorsed by the Home Mission Board.

After 10 years on the job, one Catholic officer still insists on calling him "Father." Despite his own Southern Baptist training, it doesn't bother Whitaker. "That's really a compliment. It means he respects me as a religious person in his tradition."

Such respect is hard to come by in police work, he said. "A police officer judges you by what he sees in you and experiences with you. He deals in a world where trust is everything."

To be a police chaplain, "you don't have to be a saint," Whitaker explain-

ed. "You just have to be a person who will accept officers where they are."

He believes police officers are like pastors — "put upon a pedestal by the public so that any imperfection is magnified beyond its importance."

That stress is compounded by the danger of the job, the drain of shift work and pessimism created by seeing everything bad that goes on in the world. "You don't call a police officer to have a cup of coffee with him," Whitaker said. "You call because you have a problem."

That is the very thing he attempts to overcome as police counselor.

"I'm bringing God's love to people who are so consumed by a secular environment that they may not realize the good things going on in life," he said. "As a civilian employee, I can provide an objective view about problems created by the job."

Whitaker also has a better appreciation of the police officer's world because his wife, Roberta, is a sergeant with the Charlotte police department.

To help build the kind of relationships that lead to ministry, Whitaker spends much of his time out of the of-

fice. He rides with officers on patrol, accompanies them to deliver death messages, and often shows up where a group of them are working together.

Sgt. Hank Wilkins, who has worked for the Charlotte police department for 36 years, said Whitaker always seems to show up when he needs him. "My mother passed away and he was there. My father passed away and he was there."

"In that moment, you're the most important thing in the world to him. The reverend takes me as an individual, as though I'm the only one around."

These examples show the importance of a ministry to police officers, Whitaker said. "I can't look to a number of baptisms or number of church buildings completed. My mileposts are more intangible. But I don't think that means they are any less important."

"I don't go out and deal with these people with the idea of making them Southern Baptists, but because they're hurting. I think that's what Christ called us to do, to go out and minister to the hurting."

Wingfield writes for HMB.

The Baptist Record

Thursday, November 29, 1990

Published Since 1877

"Highlights" video will air in December

Highlights of the 155th Session of the Mississippi Baptist Convention will be shown on a number of ACTS and other church cable television systems around the state during early December.

The highlights will include an introduction by Bill Causey, inspirational music, testimonies of "How I Met Jesus," and portions of major messages preached.

"That They All May Be One" was the theme of the convention and the title of the 58-minute "Highlights" video. The Department of Broadcast Services, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, produced the video in cooperation with First Church, Jackson, and Anderson Productions of Jackson. Sound and Communications, Jackson, provided sound engineers for the convention.

Videotapes of the Bible treasures and some convention sermons will be available from the Department of Broadcast Services on 1/2-inch VHS for loan by the middle of December, as well as the convention "Highlights" videotape.

If other churches in the state have access to cable channel, the Broadcast Services Department will loan them 3/4-inch videotapes (or 1/2-inch) for broadcast.

Those churches and cable stations scheduled to run the "Highlights" tape are as follows:

City	Date	Time	Cable Channel
ACTS Channel 10	Dec. 3	7:00 p.m.	Warner Cable
Cleveland	Dec. 4	8:00 p.m.	Channel 10
First BC	Dec. 4	7:00 p.m.	CableVision
Yazoo City	Dec. 7	9:00 p.m.	Channel 10
First BC	**Date/Time Pending		Walco/Bruce-Channel 2
Bruce			WO7BN Low Power TV-Ch 7
Lebanon ACTS Board	Dec. 4	6:00 p.m.	Pine Belt Cable
Hattiesburg			Channel 6
ACTS of Jackson	Dec. 3	6:30 p.m.	Capitol Cablevision
Jackson	Dec. 7	6:30 p.m.	Channel 23
ACTS of Laurel	Dec. 10	6:30 p.m.	Comcast Cable
Laurel	Dec. 11	7:00 p.m.	Channel 18
	Dec. 13	6:30 p.m.	
Meridian-Lauderdale	Dec. 2	4:00 p.m.	Comcast Cable
ACTS Bld., Meridian			Channel 31
First BC	**Date/Time Pending		Heritage Cable Vision
New Albany			Channel 23
First BC	Dec. 2	9:00 a.m.	Vista Communications
Calhoun City	Dec. 2	4:45 p.m.	Channel 27
	Dec. 5	7:15 p.m.	
	Dec. 9	9:00 a.m.	
ACTS of Rankin	**Date/Time Pending		Rankin County Cable
Brandon, Pearl			Channel 35
ACTS of Monticello	Dec. 11	7:30 p.m.	Vista Communications Inc.
Monticello			Channel 23
Lee County ACTS Bld.	Dec. 4	6:00 p.m.	Comcast Cable
Tupelo			Channel 28
Washington Co. Acts	**Date/Time Pending		McCraw Cable
Bld., Greenville			Channel 26

**Contact your local ACTS manager for date and time in your area.

EDITOR'S NOTEBOOK

Guy Henderson

A long look at hard facts

Our churches, with but a few exceptions, are not growing. In Mississippi some 68 percent have plateaued or are declining. Inactive members are increasing. Baptism ratio to membership, one baptism for every 33 members in 1975, now is an uncomfortable one for every 42. Ten years ago there was a Baptist church for every 1,242 people in our state. Today there is one for every 1,330 people.

Mississippi is becoming a mission field. One-fourth of the population is unchurched and an estimated one million Mississippians have not received Christ as Savior. On a given Sunday, an estimated 70 percent of the average community is not in any church. This is the negative side, but there are some positive aspects.

The biblical mandate has not been cancelled. The commands of Christ have not been negated. Hurting people continue to cry out. Hunger, poverty, broken families, child abuse, and crime appear rampant.

To continue as usual is to dwindle away. In Nehemiah's day the leaders surveyed the situation, prayed; and the people "had a mind to work." The survey has spotlighted some troubled areas. We must be willing to change, trust, and work if the wall and the temple are repaired.

Challenging the churches to add new units could well be part of the answer. The Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, under the leadership of Chester Vaughn, recommended an extended eight year plan — 1987-1995 of Bold New Growth, Mississippi. This is having a tremendous impact on participating churches, but for each one involved there are probably 10 to do very little.

Even Fortune Magazine in an article entitled, "Turning Around the Lord's Business" (Sept. 25, 1989), makes some sharp observations regarding churches:

— success comes to those churches that best serve their flocks.

— healthy churches know why they

are in business.

— so many needs cry out that churches fail to stick to the main thing — "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God."

— successful churches see themselves as delivery systems rather than as accumulators of human capital."

It is amazing that a secular magazine would note that religion is slipping and suggest ways to overcome it. We appreciate their input, but I still believe the New Testament says it best:

— if ye abide in me and my word abides in you ye shall bring forth much fruit.

— ye shall be my witnesses.

— an interest in all people, regardless of where they are, and ministering to their needs, will produce results.

The methods may change; the mandate is the same. Once we understand the mandate, by prayer and love, we will discover the method.

Guest opinion . . .

Will Southern Baptists open their hearts to Eastern Europe

By James A. Smith

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. — I was an eyewitness to the unexpected opening of the Berlin Wall. As the news broke of the opening borders, I was sitting at "Checkpoint Charlie." I had been working at a MasterLife conference at the East German Baptist Seminary, and was on my way back home to West Berlin.

My first reaction was disbelief. The Berlin Wall had become a part of my routine in ministering to and with the Baptists of East Germany. Since we live in West Berlin, enclosed by 128 miles of the wall, we had to constantly go through the tightly-controlled wall in order to reach any destination besides the city of West Berlin.

Yet, we are not the only ones trying to adjust to the crumbling of the Iron Curtain. The Baptists in East Germany are now able to do open and unlimited evangelism. Baptists in Hungary and Czechoslovakia have been trying to catch their breath as the members testily try out new avenues for them to "do church" in their respective countries.

In Moscow, Soviet Baptists are organizing massive evangelism rallies. In Estonia, Baptists are conducting their version of backyard Bible clubs. Romanians have responded to their newly-won freedom by almost doubling the number of congregations registered with the government. Everyone wants to move quickly while the freedoms are still in place.

Some are fearful when venturing

out on this new and unsure path. Many have painful memories of being called into police stations and being drilled for hours concerning simple attempts of evangelism in their churches. For these Baptists, these new chances are wonderful but still carry the possibility for real danger from their perspectives.

Now, these Baptists are asking us, above all others, for assistance. They trust us and want us to help them. This alone is remarkable.

However, the dimensions of their needs are almost impossible for us to imagine. In one meeting alone, East European Baptists presented needs exceeding \$3.5 million; and these were only immediate emergency needs. Churches were not permitted for more than 40 years to expand or to do necessary repairs due to aging or weather. New churches for new living areas were not permitted to be established. Religious literature was not permitted to be printed. Seminaries and Bible schools were not deemed in the national interest of the communist governments. So many things which we have had and enjoyed for decades in the United States are non-existent — yet urgently needed in light of the new freedoms.

This miracle has happened, however, in one of the worst times financially for the FMB. Giving, although sufficient for the current level of missionaries on the field, will not support increased levels of mis-

sionary presence in these formerly closed areas.

East European Baptists are also asking for assistance in establishing printing presses, seminaries, Bible schools and building new church buildings. The Soviet Baptists need large video projection units and audio systems to show films and preach to large audiences throughout the Soviet Union.

All such requests that I have received in the last few months are solid, unselfish requests for admirable projects. These needs, however, require money. We are limping on the present budget. More is needed to go through these newly-opened doors of opportunity.

God has clearly opened these doors in Eastern Europe. My question is, will Southern Baptists open their hearts for this new challenge? In order to reach the world in this new day of opportunities, sacrifices will be required on the part of Baptists living in the United States.

Old ways of "doing church" will not address this new day for world missions. It is my hope that Southern Baptists will not be content in building additional barns to house their treasures in this country. My prayer is that we will catch the vision of participating in the global ministry while continuing to be active in local missions.

James A. Smith is a Southern Baptist fraternal representative of Eastern Europe.

ALL THE DAYS AHEAD



TOGETHERNESS

On Oct. 23, 1990, the Benton-Tippah Association merger became final; and now we have just one association. This was a good step. It was not done in haste nor in anger. Just two small associations believing more could be accomplished in a larger body.

Associations came into being in 1707 as churches sought fellowship and purpose. Travel and communication were slow or non-existent. Thus the new associations were formed by churches in close proximity. Even so, you could still spend the better part of a day going to the annual meeting.

Today we have 73 associations in our 82 counties. There are associa-

tions with as few as seven churches and where you can drive across the entire association in 10 minutes. Obviously an association can do more, offer more ministries, and assist more churches if they have more churches. Small associations would do well to consider merger if it means greater ministries.

Benton-Tippah did not merge overnight, but in phases over a two-year period. I predict a stronger mission program and greater growth among the churches. We congratulate Bill McCreary, director of missions, the pastors, and churches of the new Benton-Tippah Association.

OTHER CONVENTIONS

Kentucky

Kentucky Baptists steered clear of political extremes in their convention. T. Robert White, First Church, Paducah, a self-proclaimed non-partisan, was elected president. A committee was named to study how the convention "receives and qualifies Cooperative Program gifts from the churches." By a vote of 921 to 834, they rejected a proposal for funding the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. Messengers approved a \$17,894,462 budget.

Louisiana

Louisiana messengers side-stepped possible controversy agreeing to work together to share the gospel. Fred Lowery, First Church, Bossier City, was re-elected by acclamation. They passed their strongest statement on abortion. Proposals were offered; then, in the interest of peace and harmony, withdrawn at the last minute on Louisiana College and the Baptist Message. The latter was a 10-year employment contract recently signed between Louisiana Baptist Message trustees and Editor Lynn Clayton. A \$16 million CP budget was approved.

Ohio

Ohio Baptists elected Gary Frost of Rising Star Church, Youngstown, as president. He is the first black man ever elected president of the Ohio convention. His church is in the top three in its association in Cooperative Program giving. The convention adopted a \$5,735,451 budget.

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Today's missions needs as crucial as in Lottie Moon's day, Parks says

By Jim Burton

RICHMOND, Va. — More than 100 years ago, a young Virginian woman made a critical decision which affected her entire life. In fact, the decision eventually cost her her life.

Lottie Moon accepted the call to foreign mission service and spent most of her adult life in China. But during her years of work there, China faced a famine, and the Southern Baptist Foreign Mission Board faced a financial crisis. Lottie Moon gave what money she had to buy food for the Chinese, neglecting her own well-being. Eventually, she died of starvation.

Her commitment to missions captured the hearts of Southern Baptist women. In 1918, Southern Baptist Woman's Missionary Union named its annual foreign missions offering after Lottie Moon. To date, Southern Baptists have given more than \$1 billion dollars to foreign missions through that annual Christmas offering.

Since 1961, the Foreign Mission Board has received more each year from the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering than from the Cooperative Program.

"To the degree that we have become dependent on the Lottie Moon offering, it becomes more crucial to our whole budgeting process," Parks said.

Equally crucial is Southern Baptists' ability to respond to open doors throughout the world, Parks said. In Eastern Europe alone, Southern Baptists will soon begin entering eight countries with 88 missionaries.

Just this year, hundreds of Southern Baptist pastors and lay people have participated in a volunteer evangelism project in Kenya. An estimated 56,000 professions of faith have been made and 84 churches have been started.

"We rejoice, and we are excited; but we have to have funds or much of that harvest is going to be neglected," Parks said.

Since 1986, the total Lottie Moon offering receipts have fallen nearly \$17 million short of annual goals. That shortfall has been absorbed each year by the Foreign Mission Board, said Carl Johnson, FMB vice president for finance and treasurer. But it creates hardships.

It costs a nickel a minute to support one missionary for one year. Southern Baptists have more than 3,700 career

missionaries serving throughout the world.

"The capital portion of the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering is used for tangible brick-and-mortar type projects," Johnson said. These projects include missionary homes, churches, chapels, automobiles, and other vehicles and equipment. Operating funds represent program money and even includes gas for the cars.

"We can't print money, so we make a forecast of how much money we think is going to come in," Johnson said. Based on that forecast, allocations are made to missions directors representing all areas of the world in which Southern Baptists have missions work. The area director then works with each mission to decide how much money goes to each particular mission.

Despite the previous years' shortfalls, there have been some bright spots in the Lottie Moon offering. Southern Baptists in two pioneer

states posted dramatic increases in their 1989 Lottie Moon Christmas Offerings. Michigan Southern Baptists increased their giving 112 percent in 1989 while Wyoming Southern Baptists were up 104 percent.

"You hear the stories that newer Southern Baptists may not be as missions-conscious as people who have been Southern Baptist for a long time," Johnson said. "I think it is extraordinarily encouraging that in the newer state conventions, the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering is very strong, and those state conventions have a very strong missions commitment."

While in traditional areas of Southern Baptist work there were no dramatic percentage increases, there were still signs of a growing missions commitment. In 1989, Alabama increased its offering 8.4 percent.

"The total increase for the entire Southern Baptist Convention was \$1,410,144.52," Johnson said. "Alabama accounted for \$483,000 of that."

With each Southern Baptist increasing his or her Lottie Moon offering by 10 percent, the 1990 goal of \$86 million is well within reach, Parks said. And he encourages churchwide participation.

Burton writes for Brotherhood Commission, SBC.

Book of Acts is focus of January Bible Study

By Frank Wm. White

NASHVILLE — While youth and adults both will study the book of Acts during the annual January Bible Study emphasis in 1991, separate study materials meet the different needs of the age groups, according to Sunday School Board planners of the materials.

"Acts: The Gospel for All People" (Adult Edition) was written by J.W. MacGorman, distinguished professor of New Testament at Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. "Acts: The Gospel for All People" (Youth Edition) was written by Deanna Harrison, a youth Sunday School worker at First Church of San Angelo, Texas.

The 1991 study is the first year for adults and youth to study the same book of the Bible, but "that doesn't

mean they should be grouped together for the same study sessions," said James Harvey, growth consultant for January Bible Study in the board's Sunday School growth and administration department.

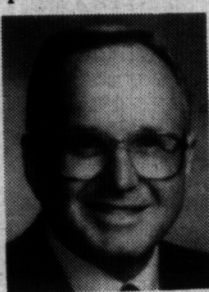
The theme of extending Christ's mission is a theme of both youth and adult studies and provides an opportunity to tie in with the goals of Bold Mission Thrust, said Harvey.

January Bible Study relates well to the 1990-91 Sunday School theme of "Breakthrough: Reach to Win" because "Acts is a key book to breakthrough when the gospel broke through barriers to reach all people," Harvey said.

White writes for BSSB.

First Church, Clinton, will host state Evangelism Conference, Jan.

The Mississippi Baptist Evangelism Conference will take place Jan. 28-30 at First Church, Clinton, featuring two



Carter

pastors, three SBC agency employees, a state convention director, and a seminary professor as speakers.

The pastors are Charles Carter and Billy Baskin. Carter is pastor of Shades Mountain Church in Birmingham. Baskin is pastor of New Way Fellowship Church, Miami.

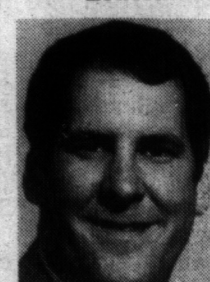
The agency employees are Neil Jackson and Avery Willis of the Baptist Sunday School Board, and Esther Burroughs of the Home Mission Board. Burroughs will speak at a separate conference for women on Tuesday, 1:45-3:45 on the topic



Lowrie



Jackson



Kelley



Baskin

"Lifestyle Witnessing Seminar for Today's Woman."

D.L. Lowrie is executive director-treasurer of the Tennessee Baptist Convention.



Burroughs



Willis

And Chuck Kelley is associate professor of evangelism and director of field education at New Orleans Seminary.

The program begins at 6:30 p.m., Jan. 28, and concludes Jan. 30 at noon.

The Second Front Page

The Baptist Record

JOURNAL OF THE MISSISSIPPI BAPTIST CONVENTION

Thursday, November 29, 1990

Published Since 1877

Billy Graham crusade to boost Hong Kong churches

By Kathie Chute

HONG KONG (BP) — High winds and rain failed to keep people in Hong Kong from coming in droves to hear Evangelist Billy Graham proclaim the gospel of Jesus Christ.

During Graham's Nov. 14-18 crusade, more than 300,000 people attended services held at Hong Kong Stadium. Overflow crowds filled nearby sports fields. When all the seats were taken, people sat on plastic bags on muddy ground.

The rain, which came from a monsoon over the South China Sea, continued for three of the five days; but people came with umbrellas, some hours early to make sure they got a seat.

The Hong Kong services were carried by satellite and video extension to 30 countries throughout Asia and the Pacific, including areas with unreached people groups in countries like Afghanistan, Nepal, and Pakistan. Termed "Mission World Asia," the extension included national television telecasts and satellite crusades in churches, auditoriums, and stadiums. Films of the services will be shown later in areas too remote for television reception.

Graham called the effort "his largest single outreach in over 40 years of international ministry."

The crowds attending the Hong Kong services resulted, at least in part, from Operation Andrew, a program initiated by the Graham organization staff in which local Christians recruited non-Christians to attend the crusade. Baptist churches and Southern Baptist missionaries have participated in Operation Andrew for several months.

"There were a great number of

Baptists involved in the crusade," said Southern Baptist missionary George Wilson, president of Hong Kong Baptist Theological Seminary and a member of the crusade executive committee. "We had 900 volunteers from our church, which has 4,000 members. The church gave over \$77,000 (to the effort)."

"Just from evidence of the number of Baptist pastors I saw participating in the crusade, our work here will benefit," Wilson continued. "Their sense of unity, their concern for other people and then getting those people in touch with others is bound to affect ministries in the churches."

For Christians in Hong Kong to be part of something so large is a definite boost to evangelical work, added missionary Dick Lusk, pastor of Kowloon Baptist Church. About 10 percent of Hong Kong's 5.8 million people are considered Christian.

"In view of 1997 (when control of Hong Kong will be returned to China), it has been an encouragement to all the churches," he commented.

On the opening night of the crusade 4,000 people, many of them old and disabled, left their seats to declare their commitment to God.

"More than twice the average number we would expect at a crusade in the United States came forward to give a commitment," said Larry Ross, director of media and public relations for the Billy Graham Evangelistic Association. Counselors registered 23,810 spiritual decisions during the five-day crusade. All of them were referred to local churches for follow-up and Christian nurture.

"There has been a greater sense of expectation from people in Hong Kong

for this crusade over the one held in 1975," said Hong Kong pastor Tong Shukee, local crusade general chairman. Much of this came from anxiety about 1997 and Hong Kong's return to Chinese sovereignty, he said. People came for answers.

A choir of 5,000, dressed in white, sat behind the giant white pulpit from which Graham told the crowd, "Many of you are worried about the future, but when you get into the future you will find God already there."

Nightly attendance figures ranged from around 40,000 on opening night to more than 100,000 at the final service. But thousands more were turned away at the gate when seating reached capacity. They lined fences around the stadium and sports fields, as well as streets leading to the stadium. People who gathered on the fields sat on the ground and watched services on a giant video screen.

Baptists were involved in nearly every phase of planning for the crusade and will actively participate in follow-up, according to missionary Christine Hailey.

Hong Kong Baptist College conducted special services for Christian Emphasis Week, held in conjunction with the crusade.

Chute writes for FMB.

Art Nelson dies

A. L. Nelson, 72, died at his home in Jackson on Monday evening, Nov. 26. He had retired in 1984, after serving for 26 years as business manager of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. The funeral was at Broadmoor Church, Jackson, at 10 a.m., Nov. 29. More details later.

Messengers reinforce Cooperative Program

Messengers to most state convention meetings this fall reinforced the concept of the Southern Baptist Convention's giving plan, the Cooperative Program, and rejected alternatives.

Only one state — Virginia — approved a plan changing the unified giving method which Southern Baptists have been using since 1925.

In North Carolina, messengers overturned a similar proposal which would have changed the way churches in the state participate in the worldwide missions, evangelistic and educational work of the 14.9 million member SBC. However, the action allows churches to participate in an alternative funding plan similar to the one adopted in Virginia.

In most other states, messengers seemingly reinforced the unified giving plan concept by approving budgets which included increases in contributions to the national budget.

Other states took additional actions. Alabama, California, Indiana and Oklahoma passed strongly worded resolutions supporting the Cooperative Program as the means of

funding missions. Florida Baptists declined to allow a supporter of alternative giving to serve as a trustee of one of the agencies.

The Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, a Washington-based religious liberty watchdog organization, failed to win support from any of the conventions where efforts were made to include it in the budget. Only at the Virginia annual meeting did the BJC receive funding as a budget line item.

At the 1990 annual meeting of the SBC, the budget allocation from the SBC to the BJC was slashed from \$397,461 in 1989-90 to \$50,000 in 1990-91.

Efforts were made in Missouri, Tennessee, Kentucky, New England, and Hawaii to provide funding for the BJC. All failed.

Since the 1990 annual meeting of the SBC, moderate-conservatives have discussed means to bypass the SBC Executive Committee and to fund national entities of the SBC which support their causes.

In two states, budgets were proposed which allowed alternative funding.

In Virginia, the new funding plan won by a two-to-one margin; in North Carolina it lost by a slim, three-tenths of a percent margin.

The record number of Virginia messengers — 4,700 — approved a 1991 budget that radically changes the way the state association distributes its contributions to world missions.

The \$16.3 million budget is the same amount as the current budget. However, next year 64.5 percent will fund state ministries while 35.5 percent will be allocated to causes beyond Virginia.

The budget provides that the 35.5 percent to world missions causes — \$5,552,200 — will be divided two ways. Half of the amount — \$2,776,100 — is to be sent to the SBC for distribution in line with the convention's Cooperative Program adopted by the SBC in June.

The remainder will be designated to eight causes: Foreign Mission Board, \$1,611,950; Home Mission Board, \$620,000; Annuity Board, \$25,000; BJC, \$75,000; Baptist World Alliance, \$100,000; Associated Baptist Press,

\$60,000; partnership missions projects, \$134,150; and a fund to assist Virginia students attending Southern Baptist seminaries, \$150,000.

Intense interest in the budget apparently contributed to the unprecedented registration figure which shattered last year's record attendance of 2,727. The unexpected crowd sent state association officials scrambling to print additional ballots and brought threats from the city fire marshal to close the doors to additional participants.

In North Carolina, passions also were intense over a budget which would have changed the distribution of funds in a method similar to the Virginia plan. A record number of 6,500 registered.

The proposed budget presented by the state's convention's General Board changed the distribution but not the figures from the current budget. It proposed to divide receipts 65.83 percent for North Carolina causes and 35.17 percent to the SBC.

In the SBC portion, 20.3 percent would have been sent undesignated to the SBC while 14.87 percent would have been designated to SBC entities approved by North Carolina.

The proposed budget provided for churches to choose as an option that all of the 35.7 percent going outside the state would be sent undesignated to the SBC.

After the budget was presented C. Mark Corts, pastor of Calvary Church in Winston-Salem, a past president of the state convention, proposed a substitute that reversed the formula. Under his proposal, if churches make no choice on the use of their gifts beyond the state, all would be sent undesignated to the SBC.

Churches would have to choose to have their funds divided along the proposed percentages.

When messengers voted, the Corts amendment passed by 122 votes out of 6,004 cast.

In Florida, messengers participated in an unexpected dispute over cooperative missions funding.

Messengers refused to let an advocate of an alternative funding plan serve as a trustee of the Florida Baptist Theological College in Graceville,

a convention-owned undergraduate school that receives almost \$1 million from the state Cooperative Program.

Although the state Committee on Nominations had recommended Patrick Anderson of Lakeland be re-elected to a second term as a FBTC trustee, messengers intervened. They first rejected the committee's entire report, then reconsidered, approving the other 75 nominees and asking the committee to submit another nomination for Anderson.

Anderson, a professor of criminology at Florida Southern College in Lakeland, was state coordinator for the moderate organization Baptists Committed to the Southern Baptist Convention this spring.

He also led a workshop at the August meeting of moderate-conservatives in Atlanta where an alternate funding plan — the Baptist Cooperative Missions Program, Inc. — was established.

The Florida committee later nominated Brandon pastor Robert Reccord for the FBTC post. Anderson's name was offered as a substitute from the floor but Reccord was elected 296-211.

Otherwise, Florida Baptists did not directly address the issue of cooperative missions funding, approving without debate a \$24 million state budget which designated 50.75 percent for state causes; 46 percent to the SBC; and 3.25 percent for ministerial annuities.

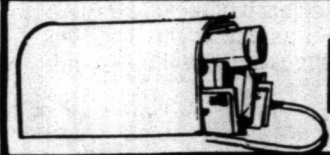
Three states passed strongly worded resolutions on the Cooperative Program.

Alabama Baptists said the CP is the "chief means through which the churches of Alabama . . . shall support our mission endeavors . . ."

Oklahoma Baptists encouraged all Baptists to reaffirm commitment to the Cooperative Program while discouraging "any deviant plan to the existing method of mission support."

Indiana Baptists warned that "negative designation could ultimately lead to the demise of our missions support program."

They resolved that as a convention "we . . . hereby publicly declare our continued support and affirmation of (See **MESSENGERS** on page 8)



Letters to the editor

A loose monster

Editor:

There is a monster loose in our society. A monster who destroys the innocence of childhood and inflicts permanent psychological trauma to its victims. Masquerading behind many faces, a host of excuses, and a legion of lies, this monster is no respecter of person, family, or socioeconomic class. It leaves a trail of broken family relationships, divorces, and mental and emotional problems. This monster is sexual abuse.

Statistically, it is reported that sexual abuse exists in every fourth household, and a rape occurs every six minutes in "Christian America." This is an estimated fraction of the unreported emotionally battered victims. The experts say that many, many victims are so traumatized they mentally block out this horrible experience until middle age or older when some event triggers a flood of painful memories and the revelation of their cause. Investigation reveals that a large part of sexual promiscuity, prostitution, and other deviant sexual behavior stem from childhood sexual abuse inflicted by a trusted authority figure — stepparent, foster parent, grandparent, baby sitter, clergyman, teacher, organizational leader, etc.

This moral insult replaces initiative and motivation with feelings of negativism. The victim experiences strong feelings of guilt, confusion, and fear causing total loss of self esteem. Overwhelmed by a sense of worthlessness, the victim withdraws from others and becomes more vulnerable and submissive to the abuser, thus continuing the pattern of abuse.

— Sexual abuse has flourished because of a complacent society. We are intimidated by fear of censorship, shouts of first amendment rights and group rights.

— Sexual abuse is provoked by pornography. As dietary habits affect the physical body, the soul (mind and emotions) is affected by what it absorbs.

— Sexual abuse is promoted when therapists/counselors without expertise in this field minimize it as only in-

appropriate gestures or situational reactions to extenuating circumstances in the abuser's life.

— The devastating results of sexual abuse are compounded when the victim is encouraged to forgive and forget. This is premature forgiveness for the emotionally disabled victim.

— Sexual abuse is promoted by liberal courts when justices and jurors grant minimum sentences or counseling of the abuser.

"Evil flourishes when good men do nothing."

Allene Goodman
Caledonia

Inspired reader

Editor:

I appreciate the responses to my letter printed in September 13, Baptist Record. I was somewhat disappointed in not seeing a comment as to whether or not Paul was verbally inspired by the Holy Spirit when he said in 1 Corinthians 1:16 "I know not whether I baptized any other."

I did note that the responses indicated that the language used in Joshua 10:12-13 should not be interpreted literally. Instead the phrase "the sun stood still" should be seen as a figure of speech. I assume that other passages can also be properly interpreted as figures of speech.

Hopefully, none of those responding in this way are seminary professors. If so, their response could trigger an inquisition by the "Fundamentalist Gestapo" I also noted that a woman responded. I assume that it is doctrinally correct for a woman to write to the editor even though she can't speak in church, have short hair or be a deacon.

Obviously, some of what I have written was "tongue-in-cheek." I am convinced that in accordance with 1 Cor. 2:11-14 a person reading an "inerrant" Word of God but without the guidance of the Holy Spirit will never know the truth whereas the reverse is also true. Therefore, the critical issue is not "errancy" or "inerrancy" but the guidance of the Holy Spirit. An inspired reader is essential to understanding an inspired Bible.

Ray A. Thompson
Jackson

Lack of knowledge

Editor:

I could not let such ignorance of the Bible go unresponded to in your Nov. 8 "Letters to the Editor" section of The Baptist Record. Mr. Meyers of Cleveland mentioned a number of so-called errors in the Bible which were obvious. I believe, however, upon thorough study of these passages, one would see that these are obviously not errors. The Bible does refer to the "four corners of the earth" but this is obviously metaphorical language. If I were to challenge the authority of God's Word based upon its metaphorical language, there would be numerous references that I could use. Five times in the Book of Psalms alone, God is mentioned as having wings under which we find shelter. I think we can safely say that the writers of the Psalms do not believe God to be a bird.

Genesis 2 is not a second account of creation where man is created first, and then plants and animals. Genesis 2 says nothing, in fact, about the creation of anything other than man. Genesis 2 specifically describes the origin of man without repeating the story of creation.

There is no contradiction between Acts 9:7 and Acts 22:9. Yes, Acts 9:7 says that the men with Saul heard a voice, and Paul in Acts 22:9 says they heard no voice. But the word for "voice" can just as easily be translated "sound." They did hear a sound according to Acts 9:7 but no voice according to Acts 22:9.

A good explanation for the "evil spirit" that God sent to the likes of Saul and Ahab is the fact that the word "evil" can just as accurately be translated "troubling" or "distressing."

I can not deal with every problem that Mr. Meyers has with the Bible in less than 300 words, but I hope this clears up some confusion. When we have problems with a literal interpretation of scripture, the problem is not the scripture but rather our own lack of knowledge.

Thomas A. Johnson
Water Valley

Brotherhood search committee announces procedures

MEMPHIS, Tenn. (BP) — The Brotherhood Commission's presidential search committee confirmed at its first meeting Nov. 10, the procedure for seeking the replacement of retiring president James H. Smith.

Committee chairman Wendell Reed, a computer systems manager from Salem, Va., said the search committee will be open to recommendations from throughout the Southern Baptist Convention.

"All correspondence will be kept in the strictest of confidence," Reed said.

People wishing to recommend a candidate for president of the Brotherhood Commission should submit the candidate's name in writing to Wendell Reed, Presidential Search Chairman, 1548 Poplar Ave., Memphis, TN 38104.

The search committee then will notify the potential candidate of their recommendation to the committee. The name of the person making that recommendation will not be revealed to the candidate. The candidate will be invited to submit a resume.

Candidate's resumes will be evaluated thoroughly, Reed said. The

committee then will interview leading prospects.

Anyone making a nomination will receive a confirmation letter from the committee that the prospective candidate has been notified.

Verbal recommendations will not be considered under any circumstances, Reed said.

Smith's tenure at the Brotherhood Commission will end June 30, 1991, if a successor has been chosen by then. If necessary, he will remain as president beyond then until another person is appointed.

The five member search committee includes: Tommy Knotts, director of missions, Aiken, S.C.; Robert Hill, pastor, Cleveland, Miss.; Joe Lenamon, banker, Fort Worth, Texas; Billy Summerlin, hospital administrator, Gadsden, Ala.; and Reed.

Ex officio members are: Don Varnado, medical administrator and newly elected trustee chairman, Alexandria, Va.; Cameron Byler, Tennessee Brotherhood director, Brentwood, Tenn.; and Grace Atchley, Brotherhood Commission administrative assistant, Memphis.

Breakthrough literature designed to help church reach and teach

NASHVILLE — From simplified teaching plans for preschool teachers to more Bible stories for preschoolers and children, an optional notebook for youth and an increased focus on evangelism for adults, youth and older children, improvements in Southern Baptist Sunday School literature are based on requests of Sunday School workers.

Breakthrough improvements will be introduced in literature for use beginning in October 1991 and will involve all three lines of Sunday School curriculum produced by the Sunday School Board.

"Improvements in adult Sunday School literature answer a real cry from the churches who have said 'we want more help for evangelism,'" said Gene Mims, pastor of First Church, Cleveland, Tenn., and a writer for adult Convention Uniform Series materials.

Mims is chairman of the Board's trustee executive committee and was chairman of the Bible teaching committee when the improvements were considered and approved.

Mims said editors are thorough in their efforts to ensure that materials are solid and in keeping with the Baptist Faith and Message.

Improvements focus on a greater emphasis on the Bible, increased evangelism and application, greater ease of use and increased attractiveness, Mims said.

A general brochure and separate

brochures on each age level will be available from the Sunday School Board and state Baptist convention Sunday School offices in January 1991.

For youth, an optional notebook, "WORData: Youth Bible study and Evangelism System," will provide a hands-on, personalized approach to Bible study, according to youth ministers Johnny Derouen at First Church of Houston and Craig Frye from First Church of Franklin, Tenn.

The notebook has 184 pages of additional information to supplement quarterly materials. The notebook includes prayer guides, evangelism aids, Bible study aids, and Bible background material.

Life and Work Foundation Series materials for children will have month-long projects in the expanded plan, while Convention Uniform Series materials will include a month-long project as one of the additional activity suggestions in the expanded plan.

Both preschool and children's teachers will find more Bible stories that will avoid unnecessary repetition. Preschool teachers materials will include simplified teaching plans to show each session's relation to the Bible teaching aim.

With the discontinuation of age-group leadership magazines, articles and materials for age-group leaders will be included in the teachers' periodicals.

OTHER CONVENTION

Maryland/Delaware

Maryland/Delaware messengers approved a plan for direct funding of the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs. A budget of \$417 million was approved with about \$4,500 going to the BJC. A resolution on harmony was adopted and the sanctity of human life was affirmed.

Florida

TAMPA, Fla. (BP) — Florida Baptists loosened their century-old bond with Stetson University last week but held firm to their rejection of alternatives to the Cooperative Program.

Meeting Nov. 12-14 in Tampa, messengers to the 129th annual session of the Florida Baptist State Convention overwhelmingly approved a plan — offered jointly by Stetson and convention officials — that gradually eliminates Florida Baptist Convention funding of the DeLand school by the year 2000 in exchange for granting Stetson more autonomy in the election of its trustees.

Messengers refused to let an advocate of an alternative funding plan serve as a trustee of Florida Baptist Theological College in Graceville.

Although the state committee on nominations had recommended Patrick Anderson of Lakeland be re-elected to a second term as an FBTC trustee, messengers intervened. They first rejected the committee's entire report, then reconsidered, approving the other 75 nominees and asking the committee to submit another nomination for Anderson.

The committee later nominated Brandon pastor Robert Reccord for the post. Although Anderson's name was offered as a substitute from the floor, Reccord was elected 296-211 in the ballot vote.

Anderson, a college professor and former convention vice president, is statewide coordinator for Baptists Committed, a moderate organization. He also led a workshop during the Consultation of Concerned Baptists in Atlanta in August and scheduled five follow-up meetings in Florida.

The 2,076 convention messengers approved without debate a \$24 million Cooperative Program budget, which represents a 4 percent increase. The budget designates 50.75 percent of receipts for Florida Baptist Convention causes; 46 percent for the Southern Baptist Convention Cooperative Program; and 3.25 percent for funding ministerial annuities through the SBC Annuity Board.

Messengers elected a slate of officers endorsed by conservative leaders in the state: Guy Sanders, pastor of First Church of Lake Wales and a member of the SBC Executive Committee, was elected president.

Messengers also:

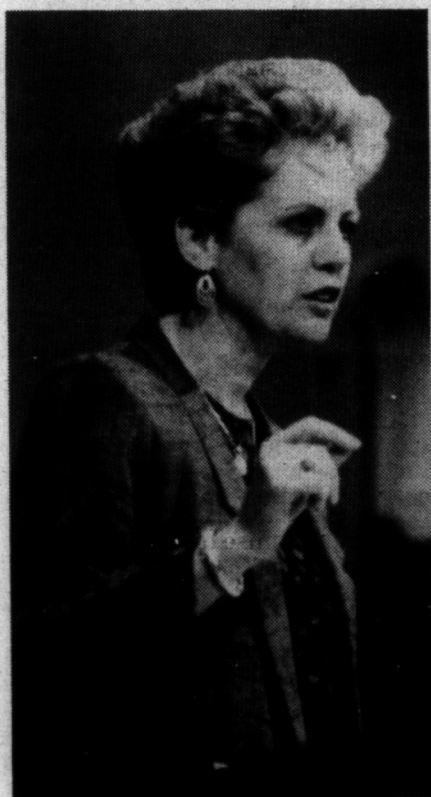
— Approved seven resolutions, including one that addresses an ongoing dispute in Nassau County by encouraging the local school board "to allow Bible stories to be read as literature" in the classroom.



Mississippi Baptist layman Jerry Clower speaks to Lay Missions banquet attendants during Convention week.



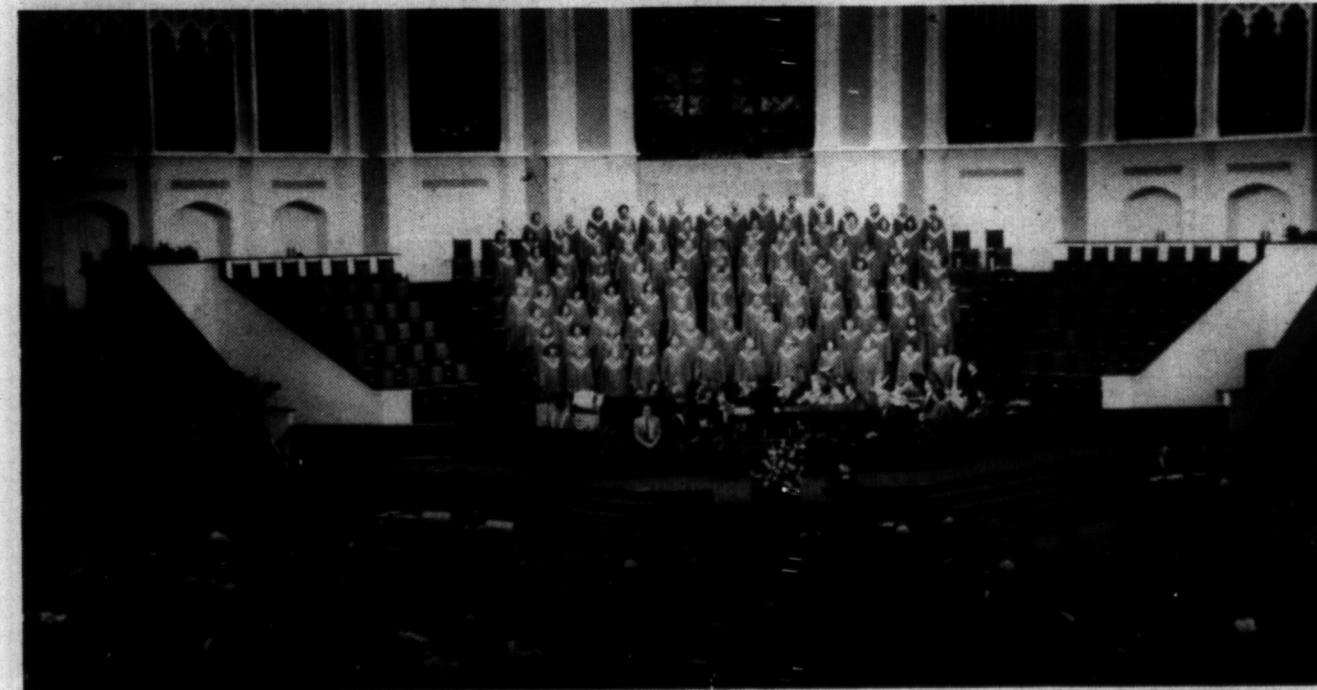
Karen Hardy, left, directs the Morrison Heights Church Choir of Clinton in a musical drama during the Pastors' Conference, First Church, Jackson.



Kay James, women's basketball coach, University of Southern Mississippi, delivers her testimony during a convention session, First Church, Jackson.



The men's quartet of the Morrison Heights Church, Clinton, sings to the Pastors' Conference, Nov. 12.



Under the direction of Paul Koonce, Hattiesburg's Temple Church Choir and Orchestra performs Wednesday evening session's prelude, First Church sanctuary, Jackson. (Photos by Tim Nicholas)

Hall of Fame inducts Wilkinson



Wilkinson

Youth Sunday School recently honored Keith Wilkinson by inducting him into the Youth Sunday School Writers Hall of Fame. A plaque was presented at an awards banquet during the 1990 Youth Writers Conference held at Joe Wheeler State Park in Alabama.

Wilkinson was cited for his contribution to youth Sunday School through writing curriculum, Youth Leadership, Vacation Bible School, Youth BTN, Event, Encounter, family ministry, and Discipleship Training. He has written curriculum for 12 consecutive years.

Several Mississippians attended Sunday School Board Writers' conferences in preparation for writing Sunday School curriculum for 1992-93. They include Stuart Calvert, Ashland, Bible Book Study for Adults, teacher;

Mark Rathel, Bay Vista, Biloxi, Bible Book Study for Youth, teacher; Barbara Wilkinson, Pinelake, Brandon, Bible Discoveries, teacher; Amy Morrow, FBC, Brandon, preschool VBS; Cynthia Louise Doty, FBC, Brookhaven, Bible Learners, teacher; Billy K. Smith, FBC, Nicholson, Bi-

ble Book Study, commentary; Ronald E. Bishop, Salem, Collins, Sunday School Adults; Cynthia P. Douglas, FBC, Columbus, The Adult Teacher; Pam Keith, FBC, Corinth, Bible Book Study for Youth; Keith Williams, FBC, Clinton, The Adult Teacher, Adult Stewardship; Keith Wilkinson, Pinelake, Brandon, Bible Book Study for Youth; Evelyn Vaughn, FBC, Jackson, Bible Searchers Teacher; Betty Davis, Glade, Laurel, Bible Discoveries Teacher; Marianna W. Albritton, Big Level, Wiggins, Sunday School Youth Adults; Peggy Ward, Highland, Vicksburg, Preschool Bible Teacher Book.

We give advice, but we cannot give the wisdom to profit by it.
La Rochefoucauld

For all of man's ages-old preoccupation with work, no one has yet been able to come up with a very satisfactory definition of this word. For work is a paradox, simultaneously a curse and a blessing. A man works when he is hungry; and it is equally obvious that he continues to work when he is well fed, well clothed and well housed. A man devotes nearly half of his waking hours to work. Some men make work out of play, and some make play out of work. But man cannot free himself from work nor, according to repeated studies, would he do so if he could. Work gives dignity and meaning to a man's life.

Harry Levinson in Think

First, Dallas, calls Joel Gregory

Joel Gregory, 42, was named pastor of First Church, Dallas, Tex., on Sunday night, Nov. 25. He will become successor to W. A. Criswell, 80, who has been pastor of the downtown church for 46 years.

Gregory has been pastor of Travis Avenue Church, Fort Worth, Tex., since 1985. Recently he was named permanent speaker of the "Baptist Hour," SBC's longest-running radio program.

Joseph Mazzola, minister of education at First, Dallas, described the evening service as the "powerful unfolding of God's plan for our church."

97 register for Ministers' Wives Conference

By Anne W. McWilliams



Fancher

Mumbower

Davis

Street

Ninety-seven registered for the Ministers' Wives Conference which took place Nov. 12 at First Church, Jackson.

Leaders of the four simultaneous conferences were Betty Davis, wife of Glade Church pastor, Laurel; Wilda Fancher, wife of Mississippi Baptist Convention Board Evangelism Department consultant, Jackson; Lynda Street, wife of Calvary Church pastor, Jackson; and Ron Mumbower, minister of counseling, First Church, Jackson.

Mrs. Fancher looked at the subject, "What's a Crisis Like This Doing in a Nice Home Like Ours?" She used three acrostics, spelling CRISES, DANGER, AND OPPORTUNITY. In the first, she said, "Crises come to everyone. Really they shock us, but are rarely, if ever, the end of the world. They... Induce, initially, usually, our worst behavior... sap our best energy... engulf us in doubt, and... shut down our usefulness, unless we recognize the dangers of crisis.

"These dangers are," she said, "that

a crisis can douse our joy and leave us in depression; anger us and fill us with anxiety; negate the good in our lives; create a gulf between us and others and God; cause the ending, unnecessarily, of relationships; and cause regrets, and even reversal of our faith to doubt.

"To change the dangers to opportunities," she continued, "we can observe gratitude; pour out our hearts to God; persistently forgive, open our hearts to the Holy Spirit; remember God; take hold of the situation; unbend; neglect not; initiate a resolution of the crisis; trust in hope; yell a little, yield, yearn, yoke."

Mumbower on parenting in the minister's home, used the title, "Parenting on the Freeway." He compared parenthood to driving. To have a trusty vehicle, he said, "keep your maintenance warranty up-to-date (provide time for you, your church, and your family; exercise; keep in touch with your world); remember that you are a model, not a pleaser, and enjoy the ride."

As "a road to follow," he stressed eye

contact, on the child's level; physical contact (affirmation, encouragement, blessing); focused attention, undivided, so that the child feels without doubt that he is completely loved; provision of structure and consistency.

In "a manual to digest," he listed several scriptures — Proverbs 22:6; Luke 2:52; Numbers 6:24-26; Ephesians 6:12; and Proverbs 24:3-4.

"Signs to follow," he suggested, are "Be a good observer (let your children be your teachers); use the rearview mirror carefully (but don't stay glued to it); and learn their emotions."

Mrs. Davis asked participants in her workshop to act out various roles a minister's wife might be called on to play, and to give suggestions on "How to Polish Your Halo" in that role. For instance, if she has a full-time job, the minister's wife must be flexible. If she is a mother, she should not take



Candy Anderson, wife of the pastor, Parkway Church, Jackson, portrays one of the many roles of the minister's wife — that of a mother. She was a participant in Betty Davis's conference on "How to Polish Your Halo."

everything too seriously; she might do something out of the ordinary for the family on holidays; and she needs to accept each of her children as a different individual. If she is a mother-in-law, she should try not to give unwanted advice. Other of her roles may include grandmother, church secretary, homemaker, church member, etc.

"Kudos for the Stage Hands" was the title of Mrs. Street's conference. "The praise, affirmation, and applause which ministers' wives often do not receive because of working behind the scenes — you will find that a support group can supply this."

Her conference emphasized the need for ministers' wives to belong to a support group — a small group of ministers' wives meeting together at a regular time, on a regular basis, committed to helping each other in

solving problems with children, or such problems as feeling owned by the church, feeling they have to do everything the church asks them to do.

"But this is not a pity party," she said. "You and your support group will share also the joys — the great things that happen to you because you are a minister's wife."

She added, "Sometimes it is not the church pushing too much on the wives, but the problem is themselves — they are setting too high standards for themselves."

Also, she stressed, "You need to establish your own identity. If you are comfortable with who you are, they (the church members) will love you for who you are — for just being you. If you learn that early on, you and your family and your church will all be happier."



Youngsters at an orphanage in Romania, which is shown in "Winds of Freedom." Members of Holy Trinity Church of Bucharest visit this and two other orphanages frequently — singing and praying with youngsters and sharing with them about Jesus Christ. Some estimates suggest as many as 100,000 children may now live in Romanian orphanages, due largely to Nicolae Ceausescu's plan to increase the birth rate.

Documentary on E. Europe wil air on December 2

"Winds of Freedom," a Southern Baptist-produced television documentary about Christianity in Eastern Europe and Russia will be aired nationally over ABC-TV Sunday, Dec. 2. David Hartman, formerly of Good Morning America, hosts the program. Some stations will air the documentary later.

Station WLOX-TV, Biloxi plans to show the documentary on Dec. 2 at 1

p.m. Station WBBJ-TV, Jackson, Tenn., plans to air it on Dec. 2 at 2 p.m.

Readers should check their TV listings for other stations in their areas that may show the program.

"Winds of Freedom" was videotaped on location — in Russia, Romania, Hungary, and East Berlin — by Radio and Television Commission production staff members.



Sandy Black, member of the staff, state Woman's Missionary Union, serves punch to a minister's wife, during break time at the ministers' wives conference, for which the WMU provided refreshments. Church Administration-Pastoral Ministries, Julius Thompson, director, sponsored the conference.



Faces and places

by Anne Washburn McWilliams



Thursday, November 29, 1990

BAPTIST RECORD PAGE 7

A happy ending

I like happy endings — and this story has one. Early last year Jim Webb drove to Mexico in an ice storm to rescue a baby he had seen there shivering in a fishnet hammock. I told the story here of how Jim brought the baby, Heidy Lara, and her mother, Alejandrina Portes, to Jackson. Plastic surgeons, at Baptist Hospital, repaired the malnourished child's face, disfigured with harelip, after her recovery from pneumonia.

Afterward, Jim and his family returned the mother and daughter to their beach-hut house at Punta Piedra. They took with them boat and motor for the baby's fisherman father, Mario; a butane tank to help with the cooking; tools; medicines; and household supplies. Many of these contributions came from individuals and Sunday School classes at First Church, Jackson, where the Webbs are members.

Time passed — a year and seven months — while Heidy Lara grew taller and stronger. Then, on Oct. 29, 1990, Jim brought her to Mississippi for a second operation, one to remedy her cleft palate. This time Jim flew to Mexico in his own plane, accompanied by Sid Bowie, also of Jackson. Thad Cochran's office had made arrangements for the mission. Permission was given from Mexico for the flight from Matamoros to Punta Piedra, and the papers and permits were all in order, even for landing on the highway near the family's house, for lack of an airfield.

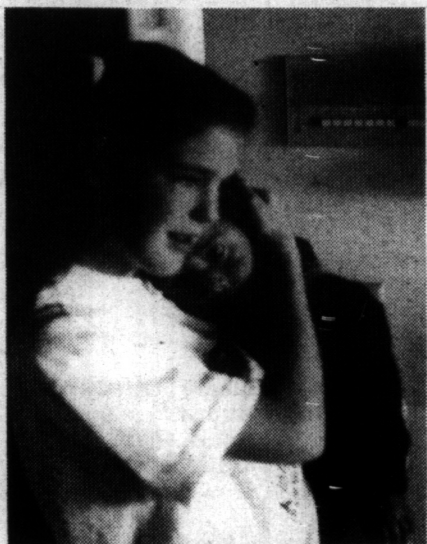
They discovered the family in much better condition than previously. Mario Portes had used his new boat to form a fishing partnership with one man and was making more money than he had done when working for someone else. He had even begun a small bank account, for emergencies. (His motor needs new parts, which Jim is providing.)

Little Heidy Lara, by then age 2 years and 4 months, was walking and running. Her large, dark, once fear-filled eyes now twinkled with mischievous laughter. Her once pinched cheeks were now rosy. And she had a new baby brother, age 5 months, the seventh child (oldest is age 12) of her 29-year-old mother. The other children were in good health. "They eat at least two meals a day," said Alejandrina. With his tools from Jackson, Mario had built a better house for his family.

Neighbors who had once shunned them had become their friends. These people had said the devil had given them the deformed baby, with the harelip, because of some sin of the parents.

But Jim and Sid had a shock in store. Mexican military personnel arrived to search the plane for drugs, which of course they did not find. However, they said, "Your papers, we think, are forged!" They would not believe anyone could be good enough to come so far, for free, to help one child. And how, they reasoned, could Mario, a poor fisherman, pay them to come unless he were selling them drugs? For two days, they kept Jim and Sid on the beach, under guard, while one of them drove to the proper place to seek affirmation of their permit.

While waiting, not knowing what to expect, Jim took a folded page from his billfold; he read and re-read the Bible verses his wife, Margaret, had copied in her notebook and handed him as he was leaving:



Carley Webb embraces Heidy Lara.

"But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary in doing good" (2 Thess. 3:13).

"And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart" (Gal. 6:9).

"Therefore, my beloved brethren, be steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, knowing that your labor is not in vain in the Lord" (1 Cor. 15:58).

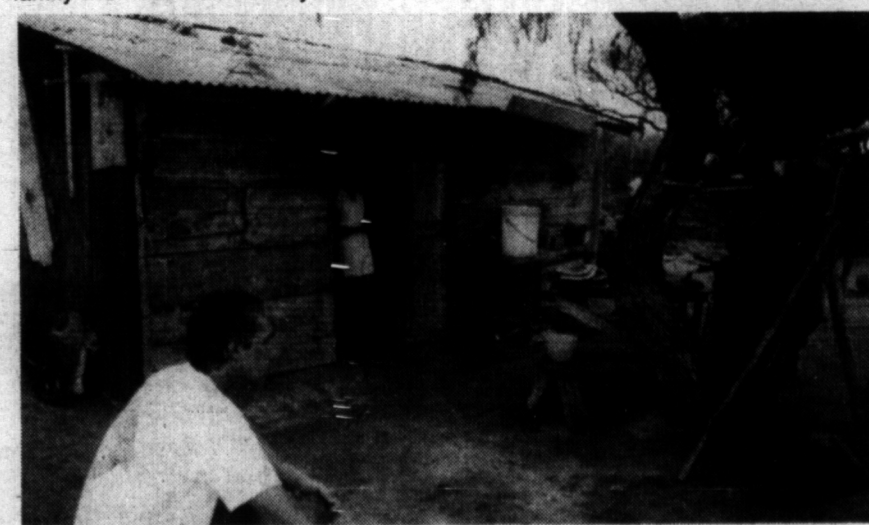
When at length they were released, Jim asked Alejandrina, "Are you afraid to fly?"

"No," she answered. "My prayers go up to God; so if I go up in a plane, I will be going up with my prayers!"

Jim and Sid, Alejandrina, Heidy Lara, and the baby Mario reached the border three minutes before closing time, at customs, on Nov. 2, barely avoiding another night outside the U.S. "When we crossed into Brownsville," recalled Jim, "Sid looked up at the American flag and kissed the flagpole!"



Jim Webb, left, gathers with the Portes family inside their new house in Punta Piedra, Mexico. The mother, Alejandrina, is at right, with the baby, Mario, center, another family member holds Heidy Lara.



Mario Portes built this new house for his family after the old one was almost completely ruined by Hurricane Gilbert.

Because of a bacterial infection, both children took lots of medicine before Heidy Lara would have her operation. Dr. Robert Smith did the second operation, as he had also done the first, and gave his services. Baptist Hospital provided its services free. The Webbs paid for two air trips (including the return on Nov. 14), plus food, medicine, and other necessary expenses.

"These visits to Jackson have been a learning experience for Alejandrina," said Jim. "On the first trip, she would eat only tortillas and black beans. This time she wanted to try American food; she was amazed at all she saw at the grocery store." Too, on this trip, she visited a gynecologist, Dr. Thomas Wiley, who performed an operation for the prevention of further pregnancies.

Since both Jim and Margaret speak Spanish well, they needed no interpreters. Margaret stayed at the hospital following the child's surgery, and cooked for the three Mexicans while they were at her house for two weeks. The Webbs' daughters, Leslie and Carley, helped with the care of the children.

"While in the hospital, we had lots of time to talk," Margaret said. "I gave Alejandrina a Spanish Bible, and she told me that she is a Christian."

Actually, for the Portes family, this is not really an ending, but a happier beginning. For Jim Webb, it may be the happy ending of one story; but already he is looking forward to future times of giving, whether it be in Mexico, in the United States, or in some other country, for he says that one of the greatest joys he has found has been in bringing joy to others.

70% of SBC churches: plateaued on declining

By Mark Wingfield

ATLANTA (BP) — If Southern Baptist churches were a family of children getting medical check-ups, the doctor would declare 52 percent of them stunted and another 18 percent critically ill.

The diagnosis: Most Southern Baptist churches are not growing.

And many of the growing churches are living off infusions from their sickly sister churches through membership transfers. It is a phenomenon one expert has dubbed "the circulation of the saints."

"Plateaued" and "declining" are the terms most often used to describe churches that aren't growing. However, defining which churches are plateaued or declining is neither easy nor popular.

In one association in the southwestern United States, pastors were asked if they thought their churches were either plateaued or declining. Few, if any, pastors said their churches fell in those categories.

Yet statistical records revealed that 80 percent of the association's churches had not shown a net growth in the past 10 years.

"Many churches that are feeling good about themselves are plateaued," notes Ebbie Smith, professor of missions at Southwestern Seminary in Fort Worth, Texas. "Some of them just haven't recognized that they're plateaued."

"They may get along real well and baptize people every year, but when you really figure it out, they are just sort of maintaining themselves."

The most common way to objectively measure church growth is through statistics. An annual net growth rate is determined by looking at membership additions and losses and changes in average attendance.

Simply put, churches realize net growth when the number of people coming in the front door exceeds the number slipping out the back door.

Among Southern Baptists, the most thorough statistical study on plateaued and declining churches has been done by Kirk Hadaway of the Sunday School Board.

For research, Hadaway defines growing churches as those showing more than a 10 percent increase in membership over a five-year period. Declining churches are those showing more than a 10 percent decrease in membership over a five-year period. Plateaued churches are those showing neither a 10 percent increase nor decrease.

Using that criteria, 52 percent of all SBC churches are currently plateaued and 18 percent are declining. When the criteria is narrowed to plus or minus 5 percent growth, 32 percent of churches are plateaued and 21 percent are declining.

Churches of all sizes and all theological shades may fall into these classifications. The phenomenon is experienced in all geographic locations. However, younger churches and suburban churches are less likely to be plateaued and declining than older churches and inner city churches.

Hadaway compared the growth rate of older and newer churches during a five-year period from 1981 to 1986. He found that older churches (those organized prior to 1927) grew only 4 percent on average, while newer churches (those organized between 1972

and 1981) grew an average of 47 percent.

Another researcher's study of churches in Memphis, Tenn., revealed that the further a church was away from the inner city, the more likely it was to be growing.

"Statistical growth is related to context more than anything," says Jere Allen, who directs the Home Mission Board's metropolitan missions department. Location and age are two "virtually uncontrollable factors" in church growth, he says.

For that reason, Allen suggests, churches should not be judged on statistical records alone. Within this context, a plateaued church is "any church which has been on the same place spiritually, attitudinally, or statistically for the past several years."

Even churches whose locations prohibit statistical growth should be able to grow in spirit and attitude, Allen says. "Some of these churches are in areas where it would be very difficult to grow, but there is an internal growth, a carrying out of the Great Commission."

"Real growth is Great Commission growth — reaching the pagan pool," Allen says. "Great Commission growth may not show statistical net growth."

"There's nothing wrong with being a statistically plateaued church if there is little or no opportunity for growth," adds HMB President Larry Lewis. "In God's sight, some of the most successful pastors are those who stay by the stuff even though they're in a hard situation where growth is all but impossible."

"However, I'm convinced most churches could grow and would grow if they had the right spirit, commitment, and strategies," Lewis says. "The reason two-thirds of our churches are not growing isn't because there's no opportunity for growth, but because there's no real commitment to growth."

Like most of its churches, the SBC is a plateaued denomination.

While the SBC has recorded slight increases in membership in recent years, the rate of those increases is steadily declining. For example, in 1950 the SBC experienced a 4.7 percent increase in membership, compared to less than 1 percent growth every year since 1985.

But Southern Baptists aren't alone in this trend. Other Protestant groups — such as United Methodists, Presbyterians, Episcopalians, and Missouri Synod Lutherans — show actual membership decreases.

Despite a rough time for Protestantism, Southern Baptists have fared better than other groups because of a long-term investment in church starting and an emphasis on evangelism, says church growth author Lyle Schaller, who is a Methodist.

A plateaued convention is a sign of plateaued and declining churches, Hadaway explains. Which leads to the Bold Mission Thrust goal of having at least 75 percent of SBC churches growing.

Despite large gains recorded by a few churches, the convention as a whole will not come off the plateau until a majority of churches begin growing, he says.

Wingfield writes for HMB.

Just for the Record



Ten members of Crossgates Church, Brandon, spent three days recently replacing sheet rock and putting in a new wall at Park View Baptist Church in Eldridge, Iowa. The damage was done to Park View Church during heavy rains in June. The members were David Langston, Gary Simons, David Watkins, Steve Odum, Johnny Taylor, Gary Williams, Carl Basden, Mike Boyd, Rodney Hillman, and Tommy Vinson, pastor. Pictured above, from left are Langston, Vinson, and Park View pastor Charles Hand.



Houston Road Church, Laurel (Jones) held a first through third grade GA recognition service Oct. 7. Girls recognized with GA buttons and badges for their completed mission adventures pictured, left to right, are Jessica Brouard, Katie Taylor, Suzanne Ishee, Anna Welborn, Jennifer Copeland, Amy Holifield, Amber Hudson, and Shannon Higginbotham. Lana Taylor is GA leader.



First Church, Maben (Oktibbeha) held ceremonies for its 100th anniversary Oct. 7. Guest speaker for the morning worship was Bill Causey, executive director-treasurer, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. A historical sketch was given by members, and a new education building was dedicated. Building committee members who participated in the ribbon cutting pictured, left to right, are Charlie Thompson, chairman; Cotton Sanders, Margaret Shuffield, Walter Diaz, Bill Causey, Harless Dewberry, and Randle Poss, pastor. The ribbon cutting was followed by an open house reception.

Walker Hill Church, Brandon (Rankin) will present a live nativity scene, Sat., Dec. 8 and Sun., Dec. 9 at 7 p.m. The church is situated near the intersection of Hwy. 18 and Rock Hill Rd.

For more information, call 825-6965, or 825-9816.

Glen Savell, pastor, Linden Church, and "Bud" Parker, music evangelist, both of Linden, Ala., were guests at Clarke College recently for a campus-wide revival. The revival was sponsored by the CC Ministerial Association.

First Church, Tchula, Holmes Association, will have Harvest Day on Dec. 2 at 11 a.m. There will be dinner in the fellowship hall at noon. Sunday School will be held at 9:45 a.m. Night services will not be held. Ladell Blanton is pastor.

Blue Mountain College Chorale will present its annual sacred Christmas concert on Thursday, Dec. 6, 8 p.m., at Lowrey Memorial Church in Blue Mountain.

The concert will feature Daniel Pinkham's Christmas Cantata for choir, brass, and organ. In addition, there will be readings and works by Mozart, Handel, Geomanne, Rutter, Praetorius, and others. The chorale is under the direction of David R. Gilmore, assistant professor of music.

Ballet Magnificat will perform a Christmas program, "A Child is Born," Saturday, Dec. 22, 7 p.m., and Sunday, Dec. 23, 2 p.m., Jackson Municipal Auditorium.

This special program will include a ballet performed by students from Ballet Magnificat's School and Studios, along with other pieces from the company's repertoire.

They ask everyone attending to bring food items to be given to those in need. A suggested donation of \$3 will cover production expenses. An offering will be taken for the Ballet Magnificat ministry. For more information, call 982-2144.

Woodhaven Church, Ocean Springs, Jackson County Association on Nov. 18 had a fourfold day. Tracy Martin, pastor, delivered the Thanksgiving sermon. Sharon Christman, church pianist, was recognized for her service to the church, and was presented a love offering. Thanksgiving dinner was held in the fellowship hall with a capacity crowd. At 2 p.m., Bobby Culpepper was ordained as a deacon. Ministers attending this ceremony were Ernest Sadler, director of missions; Bob Storie; Burl Cooley; and Tracy Martin, pastor.

Associations receive plaques

Chester Vaughn, program director, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, presented awards to directors of missions, during the meeting of the Mississippi Baptist Convention:

For Distinguished Brotherhood Associational Award, a plaque was presented to Glen Williams, Pike Association director of missions, and Tommy Roberts, associational Brotherhood director.

For Distinguished Church Administration/Pastoral Ministries Association Award, a plaque was presented to Bill McCreary, Tippah Association director of missions, and Matt Buckles, associational pastoral ministries director.

For Distinguished Church Music Associational Award, a plaque was

presented to Bobby Perry, Gulf Coast Association director of missions, and Arnold Bridges, associational music director.

For Distinguished Cooperative Missions Associational Award, a plaque was presented to Marvin Cox, Union County Association director of missions, and David Lamar Shirley, associational missions development director.

For Distinguished Discipleship Training Associational Award, a plaque was presented to Rick Spencer, Monroe Association director of missions, and Tommy Tapp, associational Discipleship Training director.

For Distinguished Evangelism Associational Award, a plaque was presented to Holmes Carlisle, Scott Association director of missions, and Tommy May, associational Evangelism director.

For Distinguished Stewardship Associational Award, a plaque was presented to Leon B. Young, Lauderdale Association director of missions, and Bill Webb, associational Stewardship director.

For Distinguished Study Course Associational Award, a plaque was

presented to J. W. Brister, Hinds-Madison Association director of missions.

For Distinguished Sunday School Associational Award, a plaque was presented to Bobby Perry, Gulf Coast Association director of missions, and Randy Riley, ASSIST director.

For Distinguished WMU Associational Award, a plaque was presented to Maurice Flowers, Jones Association director of missions, and Mrs. Vincent Scoper, associational WMU director.

A plaque was presented as an Award of Excellence to the following Associations.

Category I, Itawamba Association, Rick Spencer.

Category II, Jeff Davis Association, Ken Stringer.

Category III, Wayne Association, Lynn Mackey.

Category IV, Winston Association, Jerry Stevens.

Category V, Monroe Association, Rick Spencer.

Category VI, Lowndes Association, J. C. Mitchell.

Category VII, Hinds-Madison Association, J. W. Brister.

Missionary news

Robert and Betty Gabriel, missionary associates to Brazil, are on the field (address: Rua Senador Simonsen, 42/101, Jardim Botânico, 22.461 Rio de Janeiro, RJ, Brazil). He was born in Meridian. The former Betty West, she was born in Columbia, Tenn.

Ed and Mary Ann Moses, missionaries to Zimbabwe, are on the field (address: P. O. Box W-197, Waterfalls, Harare, Zimbabwe). He is a native of Orlando, Fla., and she is the former Mary Ann Pugh of Columbus, Miss.

Revival dates

Shady Grove First Church, Heidelberg (Jasper): Dec. 2-5; services Sun. 11 a.m., nightly, 7 p.m.; singing by Jones Jr. College BSU, Sun. p.m.; children and youth activities prior to nightly services; Perry Neal, Montgomery, Ala., evangelist; Sharber Smith, pastor.

Hollywood Church, Sledge (North Delta): Dec. 2-5; Sunday, Harvest Day, Buddy Wasson, pastor, preaching morning service; revival, 7 p.m. nightly; Billy Joe Pierce, evangelist; Ron Lusher, music.

MESSENGERS

From page 4

the Cooperative Program." They also said they "express our profound disappointment in any attempt to decrease or withhold missions giving..."

In regard to the Baptist Joint Committee on Public Affairs, Missouri, Kentucky, Tennessee, New England and Hawaii rejected efforts to include funding for the organization.

In Missouri, an effort to include the BJC as a line item for \$15,000 failed 711-500.

In Kentucky, an effort was made to establish an endowment fund through deposit of \$25,000 from 1989-90 year-end funds, as well as a one-time allocation of \$17,358. The proposal failed 834-921.

In Tennessee, a proposal was made by the Executive Board to include the BJC in the 1991 budget for \$28,000. The proposal, however, was withdrawn in a meeting of the Executive Board on the eve of the state convention annual meeting, in what was called an effort to promote harmony and peace.

At the convention session, an effort was made to restore the allocation, but was defeated by a large margin.

AFA sues National Endowment for the Arts general counsel

TUPELO, MS — Julianne Ross Davis, general counselor for the National Endowment for the Arts, is being sued by the American Family Association and its executive director, Donald E. Wildmon. The lawsuit was filed Nov. 19, 1990, in the U.S. District Court in Philadelphia.

The suit alleges four claims against Davis: slander, slander per se, intentional infliction of emotional distress, and negligent infliction of emotional distress. It asks for compensatory and punitive damages in an unspecified amount, as well as an injunction against Davis.

The suit claims that on Oct. 24, Davis spoke at the University of Pennsylvania School of Law. In answering questions after her speech, Davis told the audience that Congressional opposition to the NEA has "been fueled primarily by two sources outside of the government. One is the American Family Association, which is headed by the Reverend Wildmon." Davis then stated that "The American Family Association is simply a direct-mail political action committee. And it has a 24-point political agenda it would like to see attained by the year 2000. And it's not a pretty agenda. It includes the elimination of democracy, elimination of public schools, advocates that astrologers, adulterers, blasphemers, homosexuals, and in-

corrigible children be executed, preferably by stoning. That's one of our enemies. This is true."

The suit contends that her statements were an "utter fabrication" and "malicious slander."

"It is a very sad day when an individual who is the top lawyer of a major government agency resorts to outright lies to slander an individual and organization critical of the NEA," said Benjamin W. Bull, General Counsel of the AFA Law Center. "Such malicious lies must not go unchallenged. Davis knowingly and intentionally smeared an organization and an individual because of her political animosity toward them."

The suit states that "AFA and Wildmon have been vocal critics of the NEA and its staff. They have taken the public position that the entire NEA should be dismantled and removed from the federal budget. As a result of this public criticism, Davis has apparently developed a personal animosity against Wildmon and AFA. Such personal animosity manifested itself in the slanderous statements made by her to the audience at the University of Pennsylvania."

The suit was filed against Davis in her personal capacity.

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Bivocationals elect officers

The bivocational fellowship of the Mississippi Baptist Convention elected officers at its convention breakfast fellowship.

The officers are Billy Wells, pastor of Shiloh Church, Big Creek, president; Jimmy McCaleb, minister of music and senior adults, Southside Church, Jackson, vice-president; Gary Newton, pastor of Tyro Church, Senatobia, secretary-treasurer.

The next meeting of the bivocational fellowship will be a banquet at the Mississippi College student center, Tues., Jan. 29, 5 p.m. during the Evangelism Conference.

Hollis Bryant, Mississippi Baptist Convention Board, serves as liaison to the bivocational fellowship.

Keyboard Festivals set

A series of Keyboard Festivals is set for Jan. 24, 25, and 26. The 11 locations range from Tupelo to Gulfport.

These festivals are sponsored by the Church Music Department of the Mississippi Baptist Convention Board. They are designed to lead young people in grades one through 12 to a more meaningful relationship with the Lord through the playing of sacred music, according to Dot Pray, contract consultant with the department which plans the festivals.

Dates, times, and Baptist church locations are Jan. 24, 6:30-8:30 p.m.: Fairview Church, Columbus, 201 Airline Rd.; First Church, Clinton, 100 East College; First Church, McComb, 1700 Delaware Ave.; and Highland Church, Laurel, 2513 North 7th Ave.; Jan. 25, 6:30-8:30 p.m.: Calvary

Church, Tupelo, 501 West Main; Temple Church, Hattiesburg, 1508 Hardy St.; First Church, Gulfport, 2120 14th St.;

Jan. 26, 9:30-11:30 a.m.: Oakhurst Church, Clarksdale, 828 W. Second St.; First Church, Cleveland, 101 North Bolivar St.; First Church, Jackson, 420 North President; and Midway Church, Meridian, Old 8th St., Hwy 19 N.

Registration deadline is Dec. 17. Beginning students may participate in any area festival.

Those in need of further information or a festival handbook should contact the Church Music Department, phone 968-3800, or write Dot Pray, Church Music Department, Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205.

Medical/Dental fellowship charged to be witnesses

ATLANTA (BP) — "Think small. Every stitch you tie can be done with the love of Jesus. To some who are in despair, you may be the only visible link with the Divine."

With those opening-session remarks, James Griffith, executive secretary and treasurer of the Georgia Baptist Convention, set the tone for the 14th annual meeting of the Baptist Medical-Dental Fellowship in Atlanta, Nov. 1-4.

Subsequent speakers, consistent with the meeting's theme of "Ye shall be witnesses," exhorted BMDF members to continue volunteer-missions efforts overseas while not neglecting their often more difficult responsibilities of testifying for Christ in their geographic and professional communities.

Six hundred and fifty members representing 43 states and seven nations were at the Atlanta meeting, according to Henry Love, BMDF executive director. Total membership in the organization is currently 1,750, he said, down from a peak of 2,000

members several years ago. BMDF members participated in 500 volunteer missions assignments overseas last year, Love estimated.

Merrill Moore, former Southern Baptist missionary in Gaza currently specializing in emergency medicine in Tennessee, assumed the presidency of the fellowship during the meeting. One of his goals is to increase the visibility and membership of the group, particularly in geographic pockets where participation by Southern Baptist medical personnel is minimal.

Although witnessing will remain integral to the group, he emphasized that it does not represent, of itself, the group's reason for being.

"The fellowship's purpose is all-encompassing," he said. "It is to enhance the Christian life and experience of the doctor or dentists, as well as to enhance his witness, whether it be in this country or to his own patients or own church, or whether as a volunteer overseas."

Polish emigrant sheds tears of joy over church property returned

WARSAW, POLAND (ebps) — A Polish Baptist woman, who emigrated to Canada more than 20 years ago, wept as she stood on the steps of the run-down building in which she was baptized. "I was baptized here in this Baptist church on April 21, 1935, when I was 14 years old," recounted Mrs. Weicks. She was visiting her hometown of Zdunska-Wola for the first time since moving to Canada.

"Fourteen of us were baptized that day," she recalled. "At that time our church had 500 members, both Germans and Polish; but it was closed in 1945 by the Communists."

For many years the building has served as a shoe warehouse. All Christian symbols have long since disappeared. "There used to be a large cross on the centre pinnacle," said Konstanty Wiasowski, president of the Polish Baptist Union. "It was removed immediately."

Wiasowski told about receiving the documents of ownership. "Government officials phoned our office, announcing their intention to return this property to us," he said. "On May 17, 1990, the old church building was signed over to us. After signing the legal documents, we went with a locksmith to inspect our property. Neighbors watched as the locksmith broke the locks on the doors." Inside, there was disorder everywhere. Hymnbooks, Bibles, and everything else of religious nature had been carried away.

The 20 persons present for the opening, including the mayor of Zdunska-Wola, managed to locate one thing which remained of the Baptist church that had once worshipped there. "The Communists had left the baptistry intact," said Wiasowski.

Since the revolution in Poland one year ago, Polish Baptists have made official requests for several such confiscated properties. The property of Zdunska-Wola is the first the Union has received.

A few weeks ago the first service in 45 years was held in the church. Nearly all of the members have either died or emigrated," explained Mrs. Weicks. "Only a few are left, but they hope to begin a new work in Zdunska-Wola with them."

Dixon to lead Black retreat

A retreat for the 14 cooperating black Southern Baptist churches in Mississippi will take place Dec. 7-8 at Clinton's Camp Garaywa.



Dixon

The event's theme is "The Whole Church Doing Missions." The retreat will be led by James Dixon, a missionary for the Home Mission Board. Dixon is director of growth for the Prince George Association in Maryland. He is a graduate of Samford University and the Howard University School of Divinity.

Other program personnel will include the staff of the Cooperative Missions Department, MBCB, and Louis Lamar, pastor of Mt. Sinai, Tupelo.

Reservations may be made through the Cooperative Missions Department, MBCB, Box 530, Jackson, MS 39205, phone 968-3800.

In an historic change, a significant number of blacks are turning to the South. Since 1980, more than 100,000 more blacks have moved into the South than have left. Census data show that between 1980 and 1990, the proportion of all American blacks living in the South increased — for the first time in the 20th century — from 52 to 56 percent. And some researchers predict brisker migration in the 1990s. — U.S. News & World Report



Quilting class helps start church

PATCHWORK CHURCH — Southern Baptist missionary Jeanie Wood (left) and a woman on the Indian Ocean island of Mauritius work on a quilting project. Wood, a "church and home" worker, helped start a church there by teaching quilting and patchwork classes for women. Finished products were displayed in a prominent place in Mauritius, creating interest in Baptist work and opportunities for Christian witness. Wood also helped some women start their own quilting businesses. Her model for church planting will be included in a Foreign Mission Board manual of ministry ideas for missionary homemakers to be published next year. (BP) PHOTO by John Cheyne

Mississippi Baptist activities

- Dec. 2-9 Week of Prayer for Foreign Missions and Lottie Moon Christmas Offering (WMU Emphasis)
- Dec. 3-4 Preaching Conference; FBC, Grenada; 2 p.m., 3rd-3 p.m., 4th (CAPM)
- Dec. 4 — Mississippi Baptist Convention Board Meeting; Baptist Building; 10 a.m.

Thursday, November 29, 1990

BAPTIST RECORD PAGE 9

Staff changes

Wade Church, Pascagoula (Jackson) has called J. Wilbur Hall as pastor, effective Nov. 18. A native of Tampa, Fla., Hall previously served as First Church, Chattahoochee, Fla. He is a graduate of Mississippi College and New Orleans Seminary.

Freeny Church, Carthage (Leake) has called Mike Rounton of Flora as pastor. A native of Marmaduke, Ark., Rounton previously served at Franklin Church, Hinds-Madison Association, for six years. Rounton received a degree in pastoral ministries from New Orleans Seminary in 1988.

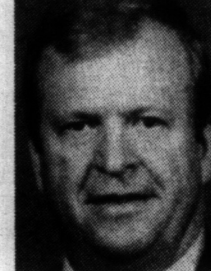
Parkhill Church, Jackson, extended a call Nov. 11 to Jimmy Sellers to serve as pastor. Sellers moved from Fellowship Church in Mendenhall.

Dennis L. Johnsey recently resigned as pastor of First Church, Pascagoula to accept the pastorate of Florida Boulevard Church, Baton Rouge, La.

Johnsey, a native of Corinth, is a graduate of Southwestern Seminary with a master of divinity, and New Orleans Seminary with a doctor of ministry. He previously pastored First Church, Summit and Mantee Church.

Springdale Church (Benton-Tippah) has called Maurice L. Pinkston as pastor. He is a graduate of Tennessee Temple in Chattanooga, and Southwestern Seminary. He previously pastored in the San Antonio, Texas area.

North Columbia Church, Columbia (Marion) has called Philip Duncan of New Albany as pastor, effective Oct. 28.



Duncan

Duncan is a native of Tupelo, and goes from Wallerville Church, New Albany, where he pastored almost two-and-a-half years.

He is a graduate of Baptist Bible Institute, Graceville, Fla., and Mississippi College, Clinton.

Bruce G. Jolly has accepted the call of Harmony Church, Walnut, Benton-Tippah Association, as pastor, effective Dec. 2. He served First Church, Sardis, Panola Association, for seven years.

Grace Church, Vicksburg, welcomed its new pastor, Horace Ross and his wife, Bonnie, Oct. 28.

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Hardy Church celebrates sesquicentennial year

Hardy Church, Grenada County, celebrated its sesquicentennial on Nov. 25, culminating a schedule of events that has taken place over five years. Former pastors Gary Black and Charles Jones were on program for the all-day celebration that also featured lunch at the church and afternoon singing. The women dressed in the style of 1840, and the men had grown beards for the occasion.

Reports church member, Charles Ward, "The coolness of November 1840 had no effect on the adamant non-mission position of Antioch Baptist Church. The heat of disagreement led to the organization of another church that today, 150 years later, is Hardy Church. The determination to be mission-minded has sustained this church long after Antioch ceased being a church."

The nearness of Troy Plantation ac-

counted for the original charter as Troy Church. Later the church changed its name to Mount Paran, which in 1934 was changed again to Hardy.

A strong mission emphasis helped to create the first Ladies' Missionary Society in 1880. From that group, the first Sunday School of the church was formed.

Hardy Church has supplied youths for summer missions in New York and New Mexico and adults in Central and South America.

Friendship Church, Grenada County, was begun as a mission of Hardy Church, meeting first in the office of a cotton gin.

Don Redmon, a former pastor of Hardy Church, is a missionary in Costa Rica. A scholarship program of the church provides scholarships each year to young pastors.

Churches warned of woman who claims to be Satanist

ATLANTA (BP) — Churches are warned to beware of a woman who has conned at least four Alabama churches by claiming to be a Satanist trying to escape death by ritual sacrifice.

Three Assembly of God churches and one Southern Baptist church in Mobile, Ala., have given the woman food, clothing, bus tickets, and other assistance. The tickets were later cashed in and not used for transportation, says Doug Shelton, an interfaith witness associate trained by the Southern Baptist Home Mission

Board.

The woman left Mobile several weeks ago, supposedly en route to North Carolina. However, she never arrived at her destination and was reportedly seen later in Washington state, where she claimed to be on her way back to Alabama.

A counselor at Mike Warnke Ministries, who asked not to be named, said the Alabama woman has been in contact with her for at least two years. Warnke is a Christian comedian who was heavily involved in the occult before his conversion.

Backslidden

Child of God:

Have you cast aside your robe of gladness, taken off the mantle of praise, and thrown down the spirit of love, joy, and peace?

In their place, have you put on the rags of a critical spirit, backbiting, frustration, anger, and impatience? Has fear replaced faith at the head of the table? Are you snatching crumbs of despair, hopelessness, doubt, and confusion from under the table?

Before you go any lower, before you start eating with the swine, just remember that the Father is standing on the threshold of home with handshaded eyes on the distant horizon waiting for the prodigal's return. You can go home again... the Father saved your clothes.

—Linda S. Leach
Greenville

Off the Record

"Mama," asked little Bobby, "don't men ever go to heaven?"

"Why, of course, dear," she answered. "What makes you ask?"

"Because I never see any pictures of angels with whiskers."

"Well, some men do go to heaven, but they get there by a close shave."

— V. Myers

"Dear Clara," wrote the young man, "pardon me, but I'm getting so forgetful. I proposed to you last night, but really forgot whether you said yes or no."

"Dear Will," she replied by note, "so glad to hear from you. I knew that I had said no to somebody last night, but had forgotten who it was."

A fellow's needs are not what he has to have — they're what he sees others have.

MSU-BSU alumni fellowship gives alumnae award

Barbara Kirkland Hamilton of Jackson was the recipient of the "Outstanding Alumnae Award, 1990" from the Mississippi State Baptist Student Union Fellowship.

Mrs. Hamilton was recognized for her contribution as the author, director, and coordinator of "The Following," an Easter dramatic presentation performed annually by Broadmoor Church, Jackson. "The Following," which began in 1984, was a three-night production of the last seven days of Christ's life on earth and it has grown to a five-night presentation with 77 performances, with a cast of 260. In 1990, "The Following" was viewed by over 7,000.

Mrs. Hamilton received a B.A. degree in speech and drama from Mississippi State University in 1966. She taught at Mississippi State University for 1½ years in the Speech Department before moving to Jackson.

She is the wife of Ed Hamilton; they have three daughters, Lisa, Laurie, and Lindsay. She is a member of Broadmoor Church, where she is a youth Sunday School teacher, directs a youth drama group, coordinates drama for all musicals, and has participated in mission projects in Mexico, Michigan, New Mexico, New York, Virginia, and West Virginia.



Hamilton

DeeDee Dickens 1990 Acteens top teen

DeeDee Dickens has been selected one of the 1990 Top Teens in Acteens by the Woman's Missionary Union, SBC, Birmingham, Ala.

From 115 applications for National Acteens Panelists, 25 applications were chosen and from them, six were selected to be National Panelists, with the other 19 chosen as Top Teens. Selections are based upon state, pastor, and leader evaluations. Consideration is given to involvement in Studia, the Acteens organization they are a part of, how active they are in their organization, years in Acteens, age, school activities, and scholarship. WMU leaders have said they feel these Top Teens are an example for all other Acteens around the world to model themselves after. Top Teens were featured in September Accent, monthly magazine for Acteens.

DeeDee was the only Acteen chosen from Mississippi for this honor. At the time of her selection, she was a member of Whitesand Church and Acteens there. She has received the highest level of Achievement in Studia. For the past two summers, she has served as a CIT at Camp Garaywa.

DeeDee is the daughter of James Earl and Deborah Dickens of Prentiss. She is attending college at Jones County Junior College and is a member of Bethany Church, Prentiss.



Dickens



Eastlawn Church, Pascagoula, recently celebrated "Madge Von Kanel Day." Mrs. Von Kanel has been church secretary at Eastlawn for 21 years. The church presented her with a plaque and a bouquet of roses. Pictured, from left, are pastor James Walters, Mrs. Von Kanel, and chairman of deacons R. L. Turner.



Second Church, Kosciusko (Attala) recently recognized five members who had one-year perfect attendance in Sunday School. They are, front row, from left, Tyler Dodds, Stacy Davis, Seth Price, back row, Suzanne Bigelow, and Melinda Price.



Ethel Church (Attala) ordained Royce Breazeale as deacon, Oct. 14. Pictured, chairman of deacons, Bill Purvis, right, presents the ordination certificate to Breazeale as Flora Breazeale looks on. Royce is director, adult Sunday School department and is Sunday School outreach leader. Paul Roaten is pastor.



Ethel Church (Attala) recently presented Sunday School Perfect Attendance pins to four members of one family. They are, from left, front row, Jamie Rone, Kellie Rone, who received four-year pins, back row, pastor Paul Roaten, Ralph Rone, Charlene Rone, four-year-pins, and Ginger Rone, church pianist, who received a 10-year pin.

A reception honoring Mr. and Mrs. Bobby Perry was held Nov. 19 at the Bel Aire Church, Gulfport. Perry was honored for having completed 10 years of service as director of missions, Gulf Coast Association.

Mars Hill Church, Leake Association, held a special recognition service recently for those with perfect Sunday School attendance for the past year.

Recognized and given awards were: Curtis Manning, 17 years; Joe Pat Mooney, 17 years; Mrs. Myrtle Mooney, one year; and Mrs. Loral Manning, one year. Lamar Jolly is pastor.

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Savior of the world — now and forever

By Jim Smith
John 4:1-45

In a time now past it was a common sight to see a wooden or concrete structure on most farms that provided "casing" for a water well.



Smith

This well was the source of life sustaining water for the farm family and often for the livestock as well. Originally many wells were equipped with a windlass and bucket which was later replaced by pumps powered by either wind or electricity. In order to encounter this water of life, a shaft was dug with pick and shovel to a depth sufficient to reach a water bearing sand.

Our scripture today records the encounter of a woman of Samaria with the source of "living water" in the person of Jesus Christ. This passage is so full of meaning that we will only be able to mention a few of the highlights in this space. Compelled by divine necessity to bring his message to those outside the Jewish community, Jesus and his disciples journeyed from Judea toward Galilee, passing through

LIFE AND WORK

Samaria. It is here Jesus met the woman at the well of Jacob as she came at noon (being a social outcast) to draw out by hand, life sustaining water.

Having requested a drink of water by her hand Jesus proceeds to introduce himself as the one who can give "living water" to those who request it of him. Jesus reached out to this woman, crossing the barriers of society, social order, race, and gender in order to bring her into the kingdom of God. He still reaches across all these barriers and more to bring as many as will come into his kingdom. He expects no less from those called by his name, Christians. Jesus proceeded to explain his meaning as he and the woman discussed the source and kind of water he was offering to give. Still struggling for true understanding she makes her request to Jesus, hoping that she might not physically thirst again to have to come to draw water each day from the well to meet her physical needs.

It is the explanation (vss. 13-14) and the confrontation with her sin (vss. 16-18) that finally opens the woman's eyes to the power of Jesus.

Hear her testimony in verse 19 "... Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet." The discussion now moves from meeting physical needs to meeting spiritual needs (vss. 20-26). The woman is knowledgeable of the tradition and teaching of the Samaritans and of the anticipated Messiah. I feel it is particularly significant to note that Jesus in verse 26 identifies himself as the Messiah-Christ. The commitment to receive the "living water" is complete. The woman moves from recognizing Jesus as a prophet to receiving him as the Saviour of her people and herself.

The disciples return and the woman hurries into town to share the good news. The sharing is essential for all Christians; it is unfortunate that we so soon lose the fire generated by our saving encounter with Jesus. "Come, see a man, which told me all things that ever I did; is not this the Christ?" Certainly the testimony of this woman is no less important than that of Andrew to Simon Peter "... We have found the Messiah ..."

Much to the disciples' amazement, Jesus was sustained by doing the will of God (remember it says he was compelled to go through Samaria) who sent him. So we should receive strength by doing the will of him who sends us

out into the world to be his witnesses. We too must behold the fields — ripe unto harvest. Ours is not to question the sowing of the seeds of faith or the reaping of the harvest unto salvation. Ours is to be faithful to pursue each opportunity that we have to both sow seeds for others and to reap the harvest we did not plant and to do all for the glory of God and not of self.

Because of her faith in Jesus and the strength of her testimony (which overcame her bad reputation) many believed in Jesus and came out and compelled him to stay with them awhile. They had a desire to know more about the Christ, this "living water" which they had encountered. Many more received him and his testimony and believed unto salvation.

The "living water" had been shared and it increased in the sharing until it flooded out among the Samaritans, washing them clean unto salvation as was the will of God. We must not rest until it washes across the earth, cleansing all who will come of all sin (washed by his blood, filled with his Spirit).

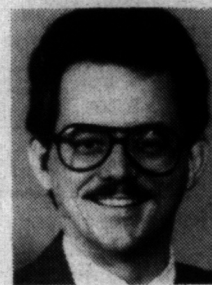
"And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely" Rev. 22:17. Amen!

Smith is pastor, Mt. Gilead Church, Meridian.

Can I begin again? — the prodigal son did

By Bob Rogers
Luke 15:11-24

A prosperous merchant's wife in Denmark gave birth to a son in 1813. The baby had a deformed spine which caused him to stoop the rest of his life. The merchant farmer was burdened with guilt because he had cursed God in his early days, and later had seduced a servant girl in his home. When the merchant's son enrolled in the University of Copenhagen to study theology, the man was pleased; but then his son rebelled against God and his father, and left home, spending time in coffeehouses and getting drunk. He seemed hopelessly lost, most like the lost son Jesus told about in this Sunday's lesson, Luke 15:11-24.



Rogers

"A certain man had two sons" (vs. 11). The younger one asked for "the portion of goods that falleth to me" (vs. 12). According to Deuteronomy 21:17, this would only have been a third of the estate, since the older son got a double share. Perhaps the younger son resented the privileges his big brother had, and wanted

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to get out. Soon he went to "a far country, and there wasted his substance in riotous living" (vs. 13). Not only did he desert his family, but he wasted his inheritance. "Prodigal" means "wasteful." How many of us today wander from God and squander the gifts God has given to us?

The prodigal son hit rock bottom. The economy went sour, and he had to take a job feeding pigs (vss. 14-15), a humiliating job for a Jew who did not even eat pork. What was worse, he was so low that he starved for the "husks" eaten by the repugnant pigs (vs. 16). These were carob beans, the fruit of a Palestinian tree, used for fodder and eaten only by the impoverished. He was as low as he could go. Could he begin again?

Verses 17-20 show the steps the prodigal took back to his father. First, he recognized his sin: "he came to himself" (vs. 17). Many modern translations read, "he came to his senses." Second, he returned to his father: "And he arose, and came to his father" (vs. 20). Verses 20-24 show how God receives us when we return to him. First, God welcomes us with open arms:

"But when he was a great way off, his father saw him, and had compassion, and ran, and fell on his neck, and kissed him" (vs. 20). Second, God forgives us and accepts us fully. The prodigal only asked to be taken back as a hired hand, but his father put the best robe on his back, a ring on his finger, and shoes on his feet (vs. 22), and killed a fatted calf to cook a big meal in celebration (vs. 23). "For this my son was dead, and is alive again; he was lost, and is found" (vs. 24). Are you lost? God is waiting for you to come in faith to him.

There is also a lesson here for those who are not lost. Luke 15:1-2 says that Jesus told this parable and the two preceding in reaction to criticism from the Pharisees that Jesus was spending too much time with "sinners." Verses 25-32 were aimed at the Pharisees and any modern-day elder brothers or sisters. Do we resent it when God's grace is freely given to any drug pusher or prostitute who walks in off the street? God reminds us that the prodigals are our brothers and sisters: "this thy brother was dead, and is alive again" (vs. 32). You and I can be right by the Father's side and yet be out of fellowship with him because of our attitude toward the lost. In this season of prayer for

foreign missions and the Lottie Moon Christmas Offering, we elder brothers and sisters need to remember that God wants us to extend his message of love and forgiveness to all the world's lost, no matter how far from God they may seem.

Remember the young rebellious student in Denmark who was mentioned earlier? On May 19, 1838, he wrote in his journal, "Half-past ten in the morning. There is an indescribable joy ... He was returning to his father's house and to his heavenly Father. That young man was Soren Kierkegaard, who became one of the world's greatest theologians. Can I begin again? The prodigal son did. Soren Kierkegaard did; and so can we, because God is waiting with open arms for you and me to restore that broken relationship.

Questions to consider:

1. Are you lost and without Christ? Read I Timothy 1:15. If Jesus saved Paul, is there any reason he cannot save you? Will you trust him?
2. Have you trusted Christ to save you, but wandered far from him? Read Romans 8:35-39. Can anything separate you from the love of Christ?

Rogers is pastor, Calvary Church, Gloster.

Jesus' preparation of his disciples

By Lannie Wilbourn
Luke 9:18-27, 46-50

"Boot camp" is the beginning of training for soldiers. The term suggests rigorous demands as part of the preparation for battle. Considering the consequences of war, preparation should be demanding. The disciples were in Jesus' "boot camp" of spiritual preparation to carry on the war after he was resurrected. It was "on the job training" in the best sense of the phrase.



Wilbourn

Jesus examined the convictions of the disciples by first asking for the popular opinion of his identity. Then he asked for their opinion. Even though their understanding wasn't complete a conviction was required. Thomas Carlyle said, "Conviction, were it never so excellent, is worthless till it convert itself into conduct." Of convictions Roy L. Smith said, "Trying to live without money is easier than trying to live without convictions." Every disciple will find these pithy comments true. We do not live our faith in a "hothouse" but in a world where convictions are hotly debated among Christians and challeng-

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ed by non-Christians. Who we believe Jesus to be is the foundation of our faith. Notice that the popular opinion, verse 19, does not include Messiah or Son of Man, Jesus, often used self-designation. It is easier to believe in reincarnation of men than in the incarnation of God! Peter's confession of Jesus as "The Christ of God" was spoken for the group. They believed he was the Messiah foretold in their scriptures. It is easier to believe in a "Holy Book" than in a "holy person" in our presence. Every teacher of the Bible is confronted with the truth of the Bible which is, "where two or three come together in my name, there I am with them" (Matt. 18:20). We must forever teach the Holy Bible in the power of the Holy Person present when it is taught. He is alive and who do you say he is?

Three groups are listed as rejecting Jesus. Luke does not say in these verses that they killed him. He says their rejection was part of the suffering Jesus endured. The "elders, chief priests, and teachers of the law" were a group that influenced religious opinions of the Jews. The depth of commitment to Jesus' teaching

was under examination. Disciples must always practice discernment. Jesus' "boot camp" and "on the job training" brought the convictions of the disciples into the open. But, he DOES call for absolute devotion from his disciples. Anything less is man-made. Cross-carrying was the ultimate humiliation of the convicted criminal. It meant carrying his own instrument of torture and death to the place where it would be used. Jesus used this metaphor to prepare his disciples for daily devotion. Devotion and discipleship were not special times or programs to Jesus. They were the living out of life changing commitment and conviction. Daily cross bearing means offering our lives each day for God's purposes. The phrase "lost his life" is often applied to someone who died prematurely. The common conviction that one who doesn't live to the average life span of 75 plus years has lost a lot. Jesus pointed to eternity where there are no years as the measurement of what is lost by those who try to live this life as though there is nothing else. A contrast of unimagined proportion is found in verse 26. To live ashamed of the words of Jesus today will bring his shame when the full glory of the Triune God is revealed.

Arguments among Jesus' disciples are painfully common. The twelve provided the prece-

dent that is followed today (vs. 46). Jesus' use of the little child was a reminder of his servant role, and theirs, and ours. Malcom Tolbert, writing in the Broadman Commentary, p.86, is scathing in his indictment of non-demanding, modern discipleship. "The 'religious' way to avoid the impact of Jesus' demands is by establishing a 'Jesus cult.' We can meet in buildings, sing songs about Jesus, wax sentimental about him, weep over him, and then emerge to walk with unseeing, dry eyes through a world of misery and need without reaching out to the kinds of people that he served. When we do this, religion becomes evil, providing an escape sanctified by the name of Jesus from the severity of his demands on our lives."

Luke tells us that John changed the subject when Jesus started "meddling," (vs. 49). Who should serve Jesus? Who serves him properly? Who serves from the right motives? Two passages of scripture should be consulted as commentary on verses 49-50. Moses spoke to the same issue in Num. 11:26-29. Paul also dealt with the same problem in Phil. 1:14-18. Should Southern Baptists have different criteria than Jesus, Moses, or Paul to decide who should be included and excluded?

Wilbourn is pastor, Pinelake Church, Brandon.

capsules

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR ALASKA MISSION TRIP next June or July. Carpenters, cement workers, electricians, plumbers, painters, and cooks are needed. This will take two weeks for each team, and the cost is approximately \$800. Call or write Gary Reichenback, Box 816, Cleveland, MS 38732 or 601-843-3021.

BIRMINGHAM, Ala. (BP) — A \$38.8 million bequest to Samford University by philanthropist Ralph Waldo Beeson is the largest charitable gift in Alabama history and the largest bequest to a single educational institution in the nation since 1986.

Beeson, a retired Liberty National Life Insurance Co. executive, died Oct. 15 at the age of 89. He was described as "Samford's greatest benefactor" because of his numerous gifts to the university over more than 20 years.

The bulk of his estate was divided between Samford and Asbury Theological Seminary in Wilmore, Ky., which also received \$38.8 million.

TEACHING POSTS IN HONG KONG — Although the events that culminated in the massacre at Tiananmen Square last year shocked and stunned the world, "the Lord is still blessing China," according to a Chinese Christian leader, "in a very hidden way."

The incident at Tiananmen Square and the upcoming transition of power in Hong Kong (in 1997 the British Crown colony will be restored to Chinese rule) has caused upheaval in the country; and Chinese people, particularly scholars, are trying to get out. But the vacancies they leave behind will provide ample opportunities for Christians to go into the country and be a presence of Christianity, according to Philemon Choi, director of Breakthrough Ministries in Hong Kong.

Since the June 4, 1989 massacre at Tiananmen Square, the exodus of Chinese from the country, often through the more open door of Hong Kong, has accelerated. That exodus will create about 3,000 vacant posts in Hong Kong universities by 1995, Choi estimates, pointing out that these positions could be filled by Western Christians. "That would be very strategic, because you would be reaching really the cream of Hong Kong, and would be in good position to lead them to Christ."

CALCUTTA, India (EP) — *Mother Teresa*, winner of the Nobel Peace Prize and founder of a Roman Catholic order of nuns which now has a membership of 3,000 and operates 400 centers around the world, has written to Iraqi leader Saddam Hussein and Jordan's King Hussein, asking them to allow her to visit them and help mediate the Persian Gulf crisis. Mother Teresa, 80, wears a pacemaker and nearly retired several months ago. She expects to hear from Iraq sometime during November. She is also hoping to meet with other political leaders from the Middle East.

MADISON, Wis. (EP) — "There's no doubt in my mind that there's a movement of prayer developing across this nation, that even at this stage I would say is unprecedented in terms of its breadth and the clarity of its focus," says David Bryant, founder of Concerts of Prayer International, an organization that works to focus the church's attention on the need for prayer. "It's interdenominational and multi-ethnic," he explains. "It's clearly focused on revival, not survival. It's focused outward, not only on revival in the church but also on the implications of that, for both local evangelism and outreach and ministry as well as to world evangelization. It's got a global perspective to it as well. There's never been anything quite like this. In terms of numbers involved we're way beyond anything we saw even in the great prayer movement in the 1850s."

ST. PAUL, Minn. (EP) — The Minnesota Court of Appeals has ruled that a lower court was right to dismiss manslaughter charges against a couple who chose not to seek medical treatment while their 11-year-old son was dying of a diabetes-related illness. The three-judge panel affirmed a district court's decision to dismiss second-degree manslaughter indictments against Kathleen and William McKown of Independence, Minn. The McKowns are members of the Christian Science faith, which emphasizes spiritual healing and discourages medical care.

THE CATHOLIC CHURCH is now facing a crisis as priests quit. Citing the celibacy rule, overwork, and loneliness, an alarming number of younger priests quit and older ones take retirement. The number of recruits is at an all-time low.

Chicago, Catholics' largest jurisdiction, loses a priest every 18 days. The Cleveland area lost 25 priests in the first six months of this year. Parishes are sharing priests who travel hundreds of miles between churches.

PARMA, Ohio (ABP) — Gary L. Frost, 36, a Youngstown pastor is the first black ever elected president of the State Convention of Baptists in Ohio. Frost was elected first vice president of the convention in 1989. Rising Star Baptist Church, Frost's church, is in the top three churches in its association in Cooperative Program giving. The Rising Star church is believed to be the first black church in the SBC launched through a home missions church planter, who preceded Frost.

FORT WORTH, Tex. (ABP) — Joel Gregory, 42, pastor of Travis Avenue Baptist Church, Fort Worth, has been named permanent speaker on the Baptist Hour, Southern Baptists' longest running radio program. The Baptist Hour will celebrate its 50th anniversary of broadcasting in January 1991.

ORDERS FOR "THE BAPTIST HYMNAL" scheduled for publication by the Southern Baptist Sunday School Board in March 1991 are approaching the \$1.5 million mark four and one-half months before the release date.

Larry Black, minister of music at the 8,000-member First Church of Jackson, and a member of the hymnal committee, said he urged his church to order because he believes "this is the best Southern Baptist hymnal we will have had in my 27 years of ministry in the local church."

BPRA offers scholarships

The Baptist Public Relations Association is offering scholarships for students interested in the field of Baptist public relations. The 1990 deadline has been extended to Dec. 10.

Since 1988, the organization has offered a scholarship of \$1,000 to an undergraduate student and a \$500 scholarship to a graduate student in the field of Baptist communications and/or public relations.

Interested students should contact the presidents or journalism/public relations department heads at their Baptist institutions or contact Kim Alley, BPRA scholarship committee chairperson, at the Southern Baptist Historical Commission.

Southern dedicates Campus Center Complex

LOUISVILLE, Ky. (BP) — Southern Seminary's new Campus Center Complex marks another milestone in the "enlarging vision" that always has guided the Louisville, Ky., school, said seminary President Roy L. Honeycutt.

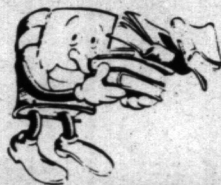
Honeycutt, who spoke at the \$12 million facility's dedication Nov. 2, said vision historically has been a characteristic of Southern Seminary. "Yet, a vision without a venture is no more than wishful thinking," he said. "This place has never been a place for dreamers who did nothing. That's been true academically and in other ways."

The 104,000 square-foot campus center, the seminary's largest capital project since moving to its present campus in 1926, contains health and recreation facilities, student com-

mons areas, student-related administrative offices, a post office, clinic, book store, and a small chapel. The seminary acquired the needed funds for construction before beginning the project, said Honeycutt, noting the seminary has a long standing commitment to sound financial practices.

In addition to securing funds for construction of the campus center, Honeycutt said that since 1982 the seminary has built a music school addition and has increased its endowment by \$15.7 million. The seminary's capital value has increased by \$30 million in the last eight years, he said.

Southern is in the process of securing \$4 million needed to construct the final phase of the campus center which will house food service and conference facilities.



Book reviews

THE WOODS ARE FULL OF PRAYERS, Selections from the Published Poems of Violet Tackett; Lorrah & Hitchcock Publishers; second printing, 48 pages, soft cover, illustrated, \$5.

"People do like poetry," announces Violet Tackett on the cover of her book, *The Woods Are Full Of Prayers*.

Phyllis Wilcox, a professor, University of New Mexico, says: "Followers of this popular Mississippi Christian poet have asked for the second printing of her book. Aunt Violet is author of more than a hundred poems published freelance since her retirement as a federal government office employee. Her books evolve from her published poems. She has a background of having had numerous Christian short stories for children published in national magazines and Sunday School papers. Now she thinks only in terms of adult poetry. She lives

on the old home place in the country where she grew up, near McComb, Miss."

On the back cover of the book, Jean Todd Freeman, former poetry editor of *The Ladies' Home Journal*, says, "I find her poetry truly inspiring. I am sure that many people will appreciate her book."

Her subtle use of symbolism hints at hidden depths of meaning. Her skillfully crafted words stir the senses.

The Woods Are Full Of Prayers is available from the author by check or money order for \$5. Write Violet Tackett, Route 1, Box 171, McComb, Ms. 39648. — AWM

Barber, Cyril J.; RUTH: A STORY OF GOD'S GRACE, Neptune, Loizeaux Brothers.

The author is a counselor on the staff of "Insight for Living," a Chris-

tian radio station in California. He has written 30 books and numerous journal articles.

The author states in the preface "very few expositions of Ruth have been published in English in the last 100 years." This Biblical book is certainly one of the most neglected by preachers. One reason may be there has been little exegetical work done on the book. For that reason, this book is needed.

Overall, the volume is helpful and good. There are isolated places where I do not agree with the author's interpretation of the text. He appears to "read" a little too much into the text on occasion. However, I am certain this is due to the fact there are few resources from which to draw in forming an interpretation of this Bible book. The author is then left to form his own interpretation without the aid of commentaries and other works.

If a minister were planning to preach through the book of Ruth, I would recommend this book as a source. — Reviewed by Greg Potts, pastor, Heuck's Retreat Church, Brookhaven.

Devotional

"Morning"

By Horace Kerr

My early morning ritual is to step outside onto the back porch or deck and marvel at the new day. I am usually out fairly early, before the sun is up over the trees across the way. When the weather permits, I'll stay out there for a while and observe the many changes taking place. One significant change is that whatever may have bothered me during the night doesn't seem nearly so bad in the light of morning.



Kerr

Mornings have taken on new meaning for me. What does the word "morning" bring to your mind? The Bible speaks of morning. In Psalms we read, "... weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning," (Ps. 30:6). Have you experienced that in your life?

In another psalm, the writer explains how this joy can happen: "My voice shalt thou hear in the morning, O Lord; in the morning will I direct my prayer unto thee, and will look up," (Ps. 5:3). One illustration of this morning joy is of a little child arising from bed and going immediately to an open window to look up and say, "Good morning, God!"

Morning introduces a new day. One never knows what that day may hold in store. In Gen. 19:27 we see, "... Abraham gat up early in the morning to the place where he stood before the Lord," God said to Moses, "... be ready in the morning, and come up in the morning unto mount Sinai, and present thyself there to be in the top of the mount," (Ex. 34:2). We probably don't expect to have such momentous experiences as Abraham or Moses, but we also may appear before God in the morning to find what he would have us do in that new day.

This concludes a series of word studies which I hope has been helpful to you. Think on these words — friends, family, home, night, morning. Has a look at God's Word on those words given them new meaning for you? What will you do differently now as a result of these studies?

Kerr lives in Jackson. Before retirement, he was supervisor, senior adults/singles, Family Ministry Department, BSSB, Nashville.

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